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SKETCHES
OF
THE BAR *and* THE PRESS

(Briefs)

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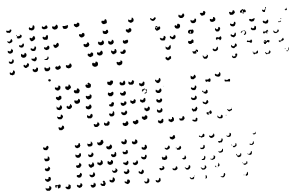
BRIEFS AND PAPERS

SKETCHES of THE BAR and THE PRESS

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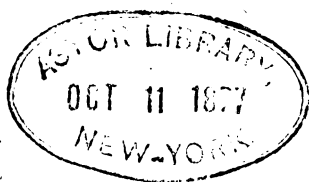
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NOTE.

SOME of the Articles which are contained in this volume originally appeared in the pages of *Chambers's Journal*; the others are entirely original, and have been written expressly for this work.

TEMPLE: *July*, 1872.



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BRIEFS *and* PAPERS.

Briefs.

IN THE TEMPLE.

‘I’VE been laundress to gentlemen of all ages in my time, sir,’ remarked Mrs. Flanagan, my laundress, this morning ; ‘but of them all, you, sir, when you fust come to live in the Temple, was the very youngest I ever “did ” for.’

- o What the nature of the preceding conversation between Mrs. Flanagan and myself had been, and which had induced that excellent lady to make the above remark, it is not necessary for me to explain ; but as she departed down-stairs, banging the outer door of my chambers after her, I found myself wondering how many years had really elapsed since I first became the occupant of the dingy set of chambers on the third floor of No. 5, Flag Court, Temple, which it has been my lot ever since to inhabit. As the result of my musings, I came to

the conclusion that Mrs. Flanagan was right. I *was* very young when, a few weeks after having entered myself as a student on the boards of the Honourable Society of the Upper Temple, I presented myself at the treasury-office of that learned body, and besought the clerk to inform me whether there were any chambers then vacant. That official looked at me over his spectacles—doubtless thinking, like Mrs. Flanagan, that I *was* very young—before he replied that there were only two sets of chambers in the Inn then vacant. One, he remarked, was a handsome set on the first floor of Parchment Buildings (rent one hundred and fifty pounds a year), and which had just been vacated by Mr. Quibble, Q.C., upon his appointment as one of Her Majesty's judges. The other set which was on the third floor of No. 5, Flag Court, Temple (rent thirty-five pounds a year), had been recently occupied by Mr. Redtape, but had become vacant by the removal of that learned gentleman to another world.

Thinking that this last-named set of chambers might suit me, I requested the clerk to show me them. It was a dreary November afternoon—how well do I remember it!—as the clerk and I left the treasury-office, and set forth upon our quest. The fog which hung over London that day was so thick that all the gas-lamps were burning on the stair.

case of No. 5, Flag Court, and looked to me as the clerk and I slowly toiled upstairs like distant lighthouses seen through a fog. The clerk was a portly man and plethoric withal, so he eagerly seized hold of the opportunity of resting himself afforded by each landing-place; and by way of filling up these involuntary pauses, he discoursed to me about the owners of the names which I beheld painted up over each door.

‘Those rooms,’ said he, ‘are Mr. Growler’s. You know his great work, *Growler on Ejectment*. Those chambers opposite to his, are Mr. Denhope’s, the great parliamentary counsel. Ah,’ remarked the clerk reflectively, ‘I remember *him* when he entered the Upper Temple—I took his entrance fees myself not twenty years ago—and now he’s making 20,000*l.* a year.’ On the floor above Mr. Denhope’s rooms we found the name of Mr. Waltham painted up. ‘Yes,’ said the clerk admiringly, ‘*he’s* a Honourable!—the Honourable Arthur Waltham, youngest son of Lord Manleytowers.—As for that gentleman,’ he continued doubtfully, pointing as he spoke to the name of a man who has since that time written one of the sweetest and tenderest poems in the English language, ‘I don’t know much about *him*, but I’ve heard that *he’s* a literary character. However,’ concluded the clerk

hopefully, '*that* mayn't be true!' With this we reached the third floor, and knocked at the door of the late Mr. Redtape's chambers. It was speedily opened, and we were forthwith confronted by Mrs. Flanagan.

She was then a very portly widow of about fifty years of age. She was dressed in a seedy suit of black, and had a swollen red face, twinkling black eyes, and iron-gray hair. I trembled inwardly at the awfulness of her aspect as she showed the chambers to me, enlarging, as she did so, upon her own merit as a laundress, and upon the devoted care which she had always taken both of Mr. Redtape and of his household gods. I found that the chambers consisted of a moderate-sized sitting-room, an exceedingly small bedroom, and a third room so small and so ill contrived, that the only use it could be put to was that of a pantry. The furniture of the late Mr. Redtape still adorned the room, 'and could be had,' I was volubly informed by Mrs. Flanagan, 'at a most moderate price.' The ceiling of the sitting-room was black with smoke; the wainscoting of wood running round the walls had originally been painted green, but was now so stained by age and dirt as to be almost unrecognisable. As for the windows, they looked as though soap and water had never been

applied to them within the memory of man. The view out of the bedroom window comprised a horizon of chimney pots; whilst that from the sitting-room looked into the dingy quadrangle of Flag Court, on the opposite side of which I could dimly discern the lights of the houses looming through the fog. My heart sank within me as I gazed, and I inquired shudderingly of Mrs. Flanagan whether the late Mr. Redtape had died in these rooms. 'O yes, sir,' replied that excellent woman cheerfully; 'he died here on this day fortnight. He made a sweet end, sir; nobody bein' in the room with him but the priest and me. God rest his sowl!'

To bring a long story to an end, I took the chambers. The Honourable Society of the Upper Temple very liberally repainted them from top to bottom; and, declining Mrs. Flanagan's repeated entreaties to take Mr. Redtape's ramshackle furniture, I had the rooms refurnished after my own heart, and in them it has ever since been my lot to live—for I decline to state how many years.

My experience of the life of a man in chambers in the Temple is, that though rough and uncomfortable in many respects, it is nevertheless far from being without its compensating advantages. It is amazing, for example, to find how much interest

one can find in watching one's neighbours. Next door to my chambers are those of a late Solicitor-general. As I lounge out of my sitting-room windows I behold attorneys' clerks bearing thither huge briefs. Thither, too, occasionally come, under the guidance of the solicitors engaged in the case, men who, from their anxious and excited looks, are clearly the plaintiffs or defendants, on whose behalf the services of the eminent Sir Longrobe Bigwig have been retained. On one memorable morning, I saw, moreover, no less a person than the then prime-minister of England walk across Flag Court, knock at the door of his Solicitor-general's chambers, and with him remain closeted for more than half an hour.

Opposite to me, again, on the other side of the court, are the rooms of Mr. Dennis O'Flaherty, the sub-editor of the 'Daily Intelligencer;' and on Saturday evenings, many a shout of laughter do I hear borne across from his rooms—testifying either to the goodness of O'Flaherty's wine or the piquancy of his jokes.

On the right-hand side of my court are the chambers occupied by Mr. Page, the 'leading junior' on the — Circuit. Thither I behold each day five or six sprucely dressed young gentlemen proceeding, each of whom has paid to Mr. Page a fee of one hun-

dred guineas for the privilege of reading his briefs, drawing his declarations, and generally doing his work for him for the space of one legal year. The other day, I beheld an amusing incident at Mr. Page's rooms. The afternoon was warm, and his windows were up. One of the pupils, in playful altercation with one of his fellow-students, threw at him the great bundle of papers at which he had been working. The pupil at whose head the ponderous missile was hurled, promptly ducked that valuable part of his person, and the papers thereby missing their mark, flew out of the open window. As ill-luck would have it, a London street-boy was passing through Flag Court at that moment. To seize hold of the valuable bundle of papers which fell ponderously at his feet, and to fly with it, was with him, as novelists say, but 'the work of a moment.' Hot chase was of course instantly given by the whole posse of Mr. Page's pupils, assisted by the Temple porters; but from that day to this, the papers have never been recovered. An advertisement offering a reward for them, and stating (of course) 'that they were of no value to any one but their owner,' was ineffectually inserted in the London papers for weeks. It is said that the pupil who so rashly threw those valuable papers at his fellow-labourer's cranium is now

a solitary exile on board a vessel bound to New Zealand.

Occasionally, however, more pleasing incidents enliven my court. But a moment ago, I raised my eyes from this paper, and I beheld, crossing Flag Court, a gentle widow lady, supported on each side by two blooming daughters; the whole party being proudly escorted by her son, a young Hopeful, who evidently had taken, only a few months ago, by entering the Temple, the first step on the road which his fond mother doubtless feels sure will lead him to the woolsack. Candour, however, compels me to state that incidents of so agreeable a character as that which I have just described are rare in Flag Court. Policemen, gatekeepers, laundresses, attorneys' clerks, printers' devils, and porters, are, it must be confessed, its normal patrollers. By craning my body very far out of my bedroom window, I am sometimes glad to remember that I can just discern the windows of the chambers in which gentle Oliver Goldsmith lived; whilst immediately below his rooms are those which were occupied by Sir William Blackstone, whose temper, be sure, was sadly tried whilst he was engaged in the composition of his famous 'Commentaries,' by the sounds of 'revelry by night' in Mr. Goldsmith's rooms overhead!

Has my reader ever been present at a dinner in the ancient hall of the Upper Temple? If not, let me describe the scene for him. Let him imagine a well-proportioned hall of the Elizabethan style of architecture, with a lofty roof of dark oak, unsupported by pillars; down the length of the hall there run long narrow oaken tables, destined for the accommodation of barristers and students; whilst across the high end of the hall, upon a raised dais, there is placed the benchers' table. Does the reader ask who a bencher is? My answer is, that he is a Q.C. who, having originally been called to the bar at the Upper Temple, is created, upon his attaining the rank of a Q.C., a bencher of his own Inn, and so becomes one of its governing body. In the hall are to be seen men of all ages, who are engaged in keeping terms for the bar, by eating that prescribed number of dinners which, from time immemorial, has formed so essential a part in the preparation for the English bar. The majority of faces in the hall are those of young men fresh from the universities; but here and there you see a swarthy countenance, showing that its owner is a native of the far East, and designs, when he is called, to practise before the High Court of Calcutta, Madras, or Bombay. Here and there, however, are old men who wish, from some

mysterious reason, to be elevated to the horse-hair before their approaching departure from life.

The men in the hall of the Upper Temple are very conveniently dined together in messes of four; and for each mess a complete dinner of soup, fish, joint, pastry, bread, cheese, ale, and a bottle of wine is provided. Each mess has a 'captain,' whose duty it is to see that the wine is properly decanted, &c.; and to bully the waiters, should they be remiss in their attentions. Barristers and students alike dine in gowns, but without hoods. If you want a subject for reflection during dinner, you can find it in the thought that the hall in which you are now dining is the only building still standing in London in which a play of Shakspeare's was acted during the lifetime of its author. For the knowledge of this interesting fact, we are indebted to a chance entry in the Diary of John Manningham, a member of the Temple, who records the event thus: 'Feb. 2, 1601, at our feast we had a play called "Twelve Night, or What you Will."' It is probable that Shakspeare himself looked down upon the performance that night from yonder music-gallery—the exquisite wood-carving of which I should advise you to observe before you finally quit the hall.

Whenever any country friends of mine call upon

me in town, and behold the open grassy space known as the Temple Gardens, they invariably exclaim: 'What a capital place for you to walk in! One would never have imagined that, in the heart of London, there would have been such a fine open space!' 'My dear friend,' I as invariably reply, '*it is* a fine open space; but I must tell you that no one who lives in the Temple ever walks in the gardens! This may surprise you, but it is quite true.'

When, however, it is my lot to pass outside the iron railings of the Temple Gardens, I never fail to observe several nursery-maids, with troops of young children under their charge, walking in them. It has always been to me a subject of wonder to reflect upon the possible district of London from which these nursery-maids and their charges come. If I lie sleepless at night, I ruminate upon the matter. What district of London is there—I ask myself—so well to do as to employ nursery-maids to look after its children, and yet sufficiently near to the Temple Gardens as to render it reasonably probable that it would send its nursery-maids and its children to walk therein? Although I have reflected upon this question times innumerable, I have never yet been able to arrive at a satisfactory conclusion. Can any of my

readers help me? Yet these same Temple Gardens, though now frequented chiefly by nursery-maids and children, are not without their romantic memories. Does not Shakspeare, in the fourth scene of the second act of 'Henry VI.,' make the red and white roses—the badges of the two Houses of Lancaster and York in the famous wars of that name—to be plucked in these gardens? Did not Mr. Spectator frequently walk here, looking at the ladies in their mighty hoops, and pondering, doubtless, whether he could not write a paper about them? Have not Johnson and Boswell, Garrick and Goldsmith, all sat and talked under yonder tree—whose aged limbs are so carefully supported by iron bars, or 'crutches,' as the poet Longfellow, when he visited the Temple a few years ago, so happily termed them? Does not Charles Lamb devote one whole charming 'Essay by Elia' to a description of the old benchers who solemnly paced along the river-terrace in these gardens? Was not Mr. Arthur Pendennis seated in yonder arbour when Miss Fanny Bolton so entirely unexpectedly met him? Above all, did not Mr. George Warrington walk here with Miss Laura Bell during those happy summer evenings of Arthur Pendennis's convalescence—the history of which has been so sweetly told to us by Mr. Thackeray?

It is pleasant also to me to know that for two whole months in the year these Temple Gardens still ring with the happy cries of children, for, in accordance with an old custom, they are thrown open from six to eight every evening from the twelfth of June to the twelfth of August to all the 'gutter children' of London, who pour into them from the filthy alleys of Clare Market, the Strand, Fleet Street, and even Southwark and Lambeth. During last summer, the Temple Gardens were visited by two hundred thousand of these children and—to their credit be it said—they did no damage to shrub or flower. So thickly do the children crowd into the gardens, that upon a fine summer night I have seen the grass literally black with them.

Hard by the Temple Gardens stands the Temple Fountain, which Charles Lamb, in his boyish days as he says himself in his 'Essays by Elia' 'made to rise and fall many times to the astonishment of the young urchins, my contemporaries, who, not being able to guess at its recondite machinery, were almost tempted to hail the wondrous work as magic.' Has not Mr. Dickens told us in 'Martin Chuzzlewit' how, as Ruth Pinch listened to the music of the Temple Fountain, she discovered that she *had* a heart, and that it was already given

to John Westlock? Under the shadow of the Temple Fountain, too, was not poor Tom Pinch, as he came from his work every evening, met by his sister Ruth, and can we not see both of them (and sometimes John Westlock also!) going smiling home together?

According to Charles Lamb—who, however, was a very partial judge—‘the Temple is the most elegant spot in the metropolis.’ Whether this be not too extravagant a eulogy I shall leave to others to decide, but unquestionably if there be any part of the Temple which may justly be styled elegant, it is the spot where the fountain stands. About twelve years ago, the benchers of the Temple had the bad taste to propose to build a new library upon the site of the fountain, but—to the credit of the members of the Upper Temple be it remembered—the whole society rose in arms against such an act of Vandalism. In the end, the benchers had to yield to the wishes of the Templars, and in order to save the fountain, they were obliged to purchase a plot of ground near the river, whereon to erect the new library. Lawyers are not usually regarded as being a very sentimental race of men, and therefore my readers would probably be profoundly astonished were I to tell them how many thousands of pounds this little bit of sentiment about the

preservation of the Temple Fountain cost the members of the Hon. Society of the Upper Temple.

I had to remark just now that no one who lives in the Temple ever walks in the gardens, and I am afraid that—to a limited extent—the same thing must be said as to the attendance of resident Templars at the Temple Church. When country-cousins come up to town, and call upon Mr. Briefless, in all probability that learned gentleman will at their request escort them on Sunday to the grand old Temple Church, with its wonderful ‘round,’ its tapering columns of Purbeck marble, its roof all ablaze with devices of the arms of the two societies of the Temple, and last, not least, its splendid organ and famous choir. Probably also, upon such occasions, Mr. Briefless may intimate, in sufficiently general terms, that ‘he attends the Temple Church;’ but I am afraid that, excepting on rare occasions, the residents in the Temple do not affect the Temple Church, and that the proverb, ‘The nearer the church the farther from God,’ is painfully true in their case. Should my reader ever feel the sermon dull at the Temple Church, I may suggest to him a subject of thought. It is said that the benchers of the Temple spent seventy thousand pounds, about twenty-five years ago, in restoring the church.

Query, how on earth came they to spend so much money ? and where are the results thereof ?

How many men do actually reside in the Temple, I have never been able satisfactorily to ascertain. Probably their number is two or three hundred. The majority of them are young men lately called to the bar, and who reside in a state of brieflessness in chambers upon the third and fourth floors. Most of these men live alone ; but occasionally two friends are to be found who chum together. Upon each man a woman who is termed in the Temple a 'laundress,' but who would be called at the universities a 'bed-maker,' attends. Most of these women 'do' for two or three men, and as their wages run from five shillings to seven shillings a week, they make, considering the lightness of their duties, a very good income. The whole work of these women can usually be performed by them in a very few minutes daily, for it only consists in coming to the chambers in the morning, kindling a fire, laying breakfast, and making a bed. In the evening, usually, the laundress again comes in, lays tea, kindles a fire, and departs. This is their whole daily duty. I know of one laundress, who, in addition to attending to her own house and family, acts as laundress to five barristers in the Temple, and thereby earns for

herself the yearly income of a curate. It has been the fashion in several popular novels to represent the Temple laundresses as being in a state of perpetual drunkenness, as continually helping themselves to their masters' viands, and, in short, victimising them in every possible way. I must say, in justice to the Temple laundresses, that, although no doubt some of them do imbibe occasionally a little too freely, whilst others of their number unquestionably entertain ideas upon the subject of *meum* and *tuum* which are hopelessly at war with those of their masters, still they are, generally speaking, an industrious and honest body of women.

On the whole, I am disposed to think that the chief drawback to life in chambers in the Temple is the great 'dinner question.' During term time, the members of the Upper Temple can get an excellent dinner in the hall of that society at a most moderate price; and why they should not be permitted to enjoy the same privilege out of term time would require no less a person than a bencher satisfactorily to explain! If the members of the Upper Temple happen to be also members of a good club, of course they can dine there comfortably enough when the hall of their own society is closed to them. The great majority of the residents in the Temple are, however, compelled nightly to

sally forth to dine at the 'Cock' (where, by-the-bye, I have often looked in vain for that famous waiter whom Tennyson has immortalised), or the 'Mitre,' or the 'Cheshire Cheese,' or the 'Rainbow,' or at some other of those ancient taverns with which Fleet Street has abounded from time immemorial.

Right opposite to the Temple gateway, too, is the famous 'Prossers,' where at two o'clock on any day the junior bar of England may be observed engaged in the delightful occupation of lunching. Upon the whole, notwithstanding the drawbacks of the 'dinner question,' and some other disagreeables, I am disposed to think that living in chambers in the Temple is, by a bachelor, to be in every way preferred to living in lodgings. Bad as a Temple laundress may be, she is in every respect to be preferred—so far as my own experience has gone—to a lodging-house 'slavey.' Unquestionably, as Mr. Thackeray observes, 'those venerable Inns which have the Lamb and Flag and the Winged Horse for their ensigns, have attractions for persons who inhabit them, and a share of rough comforts and freedom which men always remember with pleasure.' As I transcribed the above passage from 'Pendennis,' the casual mention therein of the Lamb and Flag and the Winged Horse, which are the arms of the two societies of the Temple, recalled

to my mind the witty lines which some one unknown to fame, composed upon those emblems:

As by the Templars' haunts you go,
The Horse and Lamb displayed
In emblematic figures shew
The merits of their trade !

That clients may infer from thence
How just is their profession—
The lamb sets forth their innocence,
The horse their expedition !

'O happy Britain, happy isle !'
Let foreign nations say,
'Where you get justice without guile,
And law without delay !'

Some one—also, I regret to say, unknown to fame—upon reading these lines, at once 'capped' them by the following *jeu d'esprit*:

Deluded men their holds forego,
Nor trust such cunning elves !
These artful emblems tend to shew
Their clients—not themselves !

'Tis all a trick—these all are shams,
By which they mean to cheat you !
But have a care, for you're the lambs,
And they—the wolves that eat you !

Nor let the thought of no delay,
To these their courts misguide you !
For you're the showy horse, and they—
The jockeys that will ride you !

No article which professes to treat upon life in the Temple could possibly be deemed complete

unless a few words in it were devoted to the numerous race of barristers' clerks who are to be found within the precincts of the Temple. Of no class of men, assuredly, is the saying more true that 'there are clerks and clerks.' Barristers' clerks are to be found who are grave and portly men, fathers of families, and heads of society in districts like Islington and Walworth. These are men who render valuable and well-remunerated services to eminent Q.C.'s, and who, if their masters should chance to be elevated to the judicial bench, drop forthwith into the snug position of a 'judge's clerk,' with a salary of 600*l.* a year.

There are also barristers' clerks to be found who, though termed clerks, are really errand-boys. These are lads of from twelve to fourteen years of age, who add to the impudence of boyhood the freedom of manhood, and who attach themselves ordinarily to the fortunes of some junior barrister who lives in chambers upon the third or fourth floor. These lads may be seen in the Temple at all hours of the day, lounging in the absence of their masters so very far out of top-storey windows, as to suggest horrible thoughts of the probability of their coming to grief upon the pavement below. They pass their unoccupied time in reading blood-and-thunder novels of the worst class, and in holding mortal

conflicts with other boys of their own age, who are employed in similar capacities in the same house. These are the young gentlemen who, if you tell them to remain strictly in chambers during your unavoidable absence, whilst you are calling upon a friend, straightway, the moment your back is turned, affix a notice upon your outer door: 'Mr. Idle at Westminster; will return at five; clerk gone out, but will return at 1.45 precisely;' and forthwith depart upon a round of visits to *their* friends. Some excuse undoubtedly must be made for these lads. Shut up all day in a back-room, with nothing to do except to open the door to their master's callers, or to clean his boots, or to run out into Fleet Street to buy him some tobacco or an evening paper, their life is so dull and monotonous, that I have often wondered how they contrive to bear up under it. Did not most of them enjoy, to the full, that enviable power of 'turning to mirth all things of earth as only boyhood can,' I am disposed to think that Bethlehem or St. Luke's would speedily claim them as inmates.

The manner in which the evening hours are spent by the residents in the Temple is of course very various. Some men read hard, some men write hard, some men smoke hard; others speak nearly every night at some of those numerous

debating societies which abound in the neighbourhood of Fleet Street; whilst another class sit down to a quiet rubber at whist in their own rooms with three or four friends, who share their liking for that game. Some quiet men, again, spend their evenings in having an enjoyable chat over a pipe and glass of grog with another man of their own tastes. Four times a year the serene calm which generally broods over the Temple in the evening hours, is broken by the noisy 'call parties' which, upon the occasion of his call to the bar, each man gives to his friends. At these gatherings a good deal of indifferent wine is drunk, a number of bad speeches are made, and usually some good songs are sung. Only last evening, 'night was made hideous' to me by the boisterous shouting which came from a call party which was being held on the other side of Flag Court.

But there goes the horn which, in accordance with a custom—doubtless originating in an age when clocks and watches were not—is still blown by an official of the Temple, in each court of the Inn, half-an-hour before dinner-time, as a warning to the members of the society to prepare for that repast. I must lay down my pen, or else I shall be too late for that event, which is to me not the least important one in each day's life in the Temple.

WESTMINSTER HALL.

THE stranger who may have chanced to be in Parliament Street about two o'clock on the afternoon of the second day of November in any year, will probably have beheld a curious procession slowly wending its way along that thoroughfare. He will have noticed that it consisted of some twenty carriages—in the interiors of which about double that number of rubicund faces, enshrouded in enormous wigs, can be perceived. Vague ideas that it was the Queen proceeding to open parliament in person will probably have flitted through the spectator's mind, only, however, to be dissipated by the remarks of the passers-by, which inform him audibly enough that 'it's h'only those h'old judges a-goin' to h'open the law-courts!' And the information would have been correct; for in accordance with an old custom, the judges and leading Q.C.s invariably breakfast with the Lord Chancel-

lor, at his private residence, upon the first day of Michaelmas term (November 2); after which the judges proceed in state to Westminster Hall to open the law-courts, and thereby inaugurate the legal year.

If the spectator's curiosity induced him to follow the string of carriages down Parliament Street, he would see them draw up in succession at the principal entrance of Westminster Hall, and he would behold their occupants alight in order of precedence, and slowly make their way through the narrow lane kept for them by the police among the spectators to their respective courts. First would come the Lord Chancellor—erect, pale, and gorgeous to behold in his gold-embroidered robes; whilst, closely treading upon his heels, would follow the Lord Chief-Justice of England, attired in scarlet and ermine, and with the massive gold chain of his office depending from his neck. Then there would come the Lord Chief-Justice of the Common Pleas, and the Lord Chief-Baron of the Exchequer; after whom, but *longo intervallo*, the—comparatively—insignificant crowd of puisne judges of the three courts of Queen's Bench, Common Pleas, and Exchequer. In a few moments, the spectator would see the judges disappear within the doors of their respective courts, and

the crowd of spectators which had filled Westminster Hall disperse.

Let us, however, my reader, instead of following the unthinking multitude, which departs the moment the show is over, enter the first door on the right of Westminster Hall—namely, that which leadeth unto Her Majesty's Court of Queen's Bench. Pushing back the door, we find ourselves in a narrow passage—the first object in which that attracts our attention is an apple-woman's stall! Yes, my country reader—you whose ideas of the precincts of a court of law are taken from the assize courts of the town of Cotton-cum-Barley, from which such a sacrilegious intruder would be ruthlessly expelled by fussy policemen—it is right that you should know that there is actually established at the very door of the supreme court of common law in England that most familiar of objects, an apple-woman's stall! Nay, it is even whispered in Westminster Hall that an eminent Attorney-General has been seen more than once to stop and buy a piece of hardbake of the decent old woman who presides at it. This report must, however, have surely been set afloat by those misguided men who assert—what I, with my respect for the constituted authorities of my country, will never bring myself to believe—that an eminent Lord Chancellor is in

the constant habit of travelling during the parliamentary session from Lincoln's Inn to Westminster by the penny-boat from the Temple pier !

However, let us raise the red curtain which hangs just beyond the apple-woman's stall, and by so doing we shall pass into the Court of Queen's Bench. The court, this being the first day of Michaelmas term, is sitting (what lawyers call) 'in banc,' and therefore you behold four judges established upon the judicial bench. The second seat upon this bench—carrying the eye from left to right—is occupied by the Lord Chief-Justice of England, whilst upon his right hand sits the senior puisne judge, and upon his left the other two puisne judges. Fronting the judges are three rows of seats, which are, by an agreeable fiction, supposed to be 'reserved' for the use of counsel—the simple fact being, that unless these seats are actually occupied by counsel, they are invariably appropriated by aspiring members of the general public. The front row of these three is, however, really reserved for the use of Q.C.s and serjeants-at-law, who 'you observe' wear silk gowns. The second and third rows of seats are occupied by 'junior counsel'—that is, men who, not having attained to the rank of a Queen's Counsel or a serjeant-at-law (although most of them, as you may

yourself see, are men of forty), are still, by a pleasing legal fiction, denominated 'juniors'—probably to induce them to believe that professional promotion is not yet hopeless!

Behind the seats intended for the bar are those for the accommodation of the general public. Who the general public are who daily throng the back seats of the Court of Queen's Bench, has always been to me a social problem of the greatest possible interest. No matter how uninteresting may be the details of the case which is being heard, no matter although, from the technical nature of the argument, they can understand no more of the merits of the case than if it had been conducted in Greek, that crowd of greasy, ill-dressed men never quit their seats. Before the judges take their places in the morning, these strangers are in *theirs*, and save when the court rises for luncheon in the middle of the day, they never quit them till nightfall. Day after day, the same faces appear in the same places. Are they, I wonder, former litigants, who, having spent their little all in feeing lawyers, now haunt the scene of their ruin? Are they retired tradesmen, who having, in an evil hour, resigned their businesses, are now so afflicted with *ennui* as to be driven to kill time by spending their days in the law-courts? Are they—and this I am assured is

a very credible supposition—the husbands of wives who keep lodging-houses, and who insist upon their husbands absenting themselves from home during the hours devoted to ‘ridding up’ the said houses? Or are they men who believe that their vocation in life would have been that of a judge or a barrister, and who feel a melancholy pleasure in contemplating what they *might* have been, had Fortune smiled more kindly upon their birth?

There are four legal terms in the year, each of which is of about three weeks’ duration, and during every day in term-time the three courts of Queen’s Bench, Common Pleas, and Exchequer sit ‘in banc’—by this it is meant that the judges of each court sit together, and decide purely legal questions. If, upon the other hand, a matter of fact, as distinguished from a matter of law, has to be tried, one judge sits in another court, and disposes of it with the assistance of a jury. Let me illustrate this distinction by an example. Suppose that I take a through-ticket, issued to me by the Great Loamshire Railway Company, from Queen’s Cross to Hawestown; and suppose that it is necessary for me to change carriages at Hitchindale Junction, and be conveyed therefrom to my destination by the Little Loamshire Railway Company;

suppose, further, that in this second stage of my journey an accident occurs to my train, whereby I am injured. Of course I bring my action at the next Loamshire assizes against the Great Loamshire Railway Company; and the question of *fact* to be decided at the trial by the jury is, whether the accident occurred by the negligence of the servants of the Little Loamshire Railway Company? A sympathetic jury of my fellow-countrymen of course come to the conclusion that the Company's servants were in fault, and award me three thousand pounds by way of damages.

My joy at winning the trial would have been great had it not been for the fact, that the judge who presided at the trial at the Loamshire assizes 'reserved leave' (to quote the words of the 'Times' report) 'to the defendants to move to enter the verdict for them, upon the ground that the accident having occurred upon the Little Loamshire Railway Company's line, the plaintiff ought to have brought his action against that Company, and not against the Great Loamshire Railway Company.' Of course my case is, that I made my contract with the Great Loamshire Railway Company to be carried from Queen's Cross to Hawestown, and that I have nothing to do with the circumstance of the accident having happened upon the Little

Loamshire Railway Company's system. Here, however, as my reader will, I trust, see, is a legal point raised, which, according to the practice of our courts, would have to be decided by the judges sitting together in banc.

As we enter the Court of Queen's Bench, let me suppose that the counsel for the Great Loamshire Railway Company, Mr. Hardhead, Q.C., is moving to enter the verdict which was recorded in my favour, for the defendants pursuant to leave reserved, &c. Look well, my reader, at Mr. Hardhead, for although he is small in stature, although his voice is weak, although he is racked at the present moment by his hereditary enemy the gout, yet observe how superbly the little man argues his case ; mark with what readiness he cites every case which can be found in the Law Reports bearing upon the point at issue, with what matchless lucidity he exhibits the exact differences in the points decided in each of these cases, and with what unfailing quickness he meets and combats any objections which may be made by the judges to his arguments. Right well, too, does he know how to snub a weak judge, who may worry him by making futile objections to his arguments, or an ignorant one, who is not up—as he ought to be—in his 'leading cases.' For example, you observe,

that small dark judge, who is seated on the extreme left of the Lord Chief-Justice, suddenly leans forward, and sputters out: 'I think, Mr. Hardhead, you will find that the case of *Brown v. the Great Pontypool Canal Company* is distinctly against your present contention.'

'And *I* think,' rejoins Mr. Hardhead, as quick as lightning, 'that your Lordship will find that *Brown v. the Great Pontypool Canal Company* was overruled by the Exchequer Chamber in *Jones v. the Little Puddington Steam-ship Company*.' Whereupon, the little judge, blushing up to the roots of his wig, retires crushed into his corner; and if you look very closely at the corners of the Chief-Justice's mouth, I think that you will see lurking there a sternly-repressed smile of enjoyment at the discomfiture of the little judge, between whom and the Lord Chief-Justice it is well known that there is little love lost.

So the battle rages, Hardhead, Q.C., fighting gallantly on to the end; and when, at the close of a lengthened argument—'the details of which,' to-morrow's 'Morning Muffin' will tell you, 'were of no interest to the general public'—the Lord Chief-Justice says: 'Take a rule, Mr. Hardhead,' you feel that you have witnessed a great intellectual feat, and you wonder more and more at the

clearness and strength of the mind which dwells in Mr. Hardhead's frail body.

Although, as I have just said, the 'Morning Muffin' will to-morrow tell its readers that the argument to which we have been listening was entirely without interest to the general public, it will devote two columns of its space to a report of a trial for breach of promise of marriage, which is now going on in the little dingy room known as the Bail Court, and in which, during term-time, one of the judges of the Court of Queen's Bench sits to dispose of what are known as 'common jury cases.' Let us enter this Bail Court, though I promise you we shall not stay long, for see, the court is crowded from floor to ceiling with a dense mass of those greasy ill-dressed men, upon whose social position I ventured a few minutes ago to speculate. They are listening breathlessly, you observe, to the Milesian oratory of Mr. Serjeant Rory O'Moore, who is depicting, in burning words, the wrongs undergone by 'me fare cleent'—a young milliner who had become engaged to a man of five-and-forty, and had been 'thraitorously' rejected by him. Presently, the plaintiff is called; and, when, upon being asked, in cross-examination, whether she did not think the defendant very ugly, she replies to the interrogating counsel: 'No, not half

so ugly as *you* are!’ the exquisite neatness and point of this reply, you observe, causes the crowd in court to hee-haw loudly. This question and answer, the reporter of the ‘Morning Muffin,’ with an accurate estimate of the mental calibre of his readers, will to-morrow record in full, and will further add that it was received in court with ‘roars of laughter.’

Of course the result of all this newspaper puffing is, that the readers of the ‘Morning Muffin,’ from the frequency with which they see Mr. Serjeant O’Moore’s name in the columns of that newspaper, come to regard him as being at the head of his profession, and wonder how it is that (to them) unknown men, like Mr. Hardhead, Q.C., should somehow be made judges, whilst Mr. Serjeant O’Moore is still left to adorn the English bar. Still more astonished would these good readers be could they but obtain a sight of Mr. Hardhead’s fee-book, which they would find records an income of seven thousand pounds a year, while poor Serjeant O’Moore’s never reaches within a fourth of that sum. Of course, the explanation is, that whereas Mr. Hardhead is engaged in heavy commercial cases, in which the interests involved are enormous, and his fees correspondingly large, Mr. Serjeant O’Moore’s practice lies exclusively in a class of cases

which, although they possess what reporters call 'great interest for the general public,' are studiously avoided by all barristers of real ability who are aiming at the great rewards of their profession.

The work which goes on every day during term-time in the courts of Common Pleas and Exchequer is precisely similar to that which I have endeavoured to describe in the Court of Queen's Bench, and therefore we need not trouble to enter either of these first-named courts.

Let us, however, walk up to the highest door on the right-hand side of Westminster Hall, for that will lead us to a court the constitution and practice of which are alike different to those of the common law-courts. As we pass through the door, and climb the stairs to which it gives access, you hear in the distance a sound which recalls to your mind the solitary occasion upon which you went down to the sea in ships (in voyaging from London to Boulogne), and suffered horribly in so doing from the pangs of sea-sickness. But there is at present no cause for alarm. You are safe upon dry land, and the sound which recalls to your mind the terrible past is only the voice of the master of the good collier-brig 'Betsy Jane,' who is engaged in giving evidence in the Admiralty Court, the door of which we are now entering. The 'Betsy Jane' has, in the opinion (of

course) of her master, been run down in a most foul and unseamanlike way by the screw-steamer 'Seaton,' of which last-named vessel and her crew he (the master of the 'Betsy Jane') can scarcely speak in terms of sufficient reprobation. As we enter the court, the master of the 'Betsy Jane' is under cross-examination, and is being besought by the learned counsel for the defendants to explain how if the wind was north-north-west, as the master of the 'Betsy Jane' asserted, and the 'Betsy Jane' herself was steering west-south-west, she could possibly be close hauled on the starboard tack? Of course the master of the 'Betsy Jane' begins to edge out of this difficulty by saying that he can't tell 'to half a point' how the wind was. He is then earnestly entreated by his antagonist to 'try,' which, however, he vows he can't do 'no nearer than he has done,' &c.

Those two old gentlemen dressed in nautical uniform, who are seated alongside of the judge, and who are such amused spectators of a contest in which all the nautical knowledge is on one side, and all the practised skill of an examiner upon the other, are the two Trinity masters, whose duty it is to advise the judge of the Admiralty Court upon all nautical matters which may come before him, and who, in fact, form a kind of skilled jury by whom the facts

in each nautical case are decided. The matters discussed in the Admiralty Court (of which the foregoing illustration may be taken as an example) are too technical, you say, to interest you much; so let us leave the master of the 'Betsy Jane' to his fate, and pass down yonder staircase. Arrived at the foot thereof, we take a turn to the left, and are then in a court, the crowded state of which contrasts wonderfully with the handful of people who were assembled in the Admiralty Court.

Your wonder ceases, however, when I tell you that this is the Divorce Court—that that fair lady who is seated upon a chair upon the left of the judge is the petitioner in the famous case of *De Vere v. De Vere*. All London is here; for are not even the very highest names mixed up in this trial, and are not the most eminent counsel—with huge fees marked upon their briefs—retained on one side or the other? That man with the prominent nose and acute face is the successor of Sir Cresswell Cresswell on the judgment-seat, and watch with what wonderful patience he attends to the evidence which is being given. Occasionally, however, even he loses temper at the wide line of cross-examination adopted by one of the counsel, whom he peremptorily requests 'to stick to the point.' This, as his lordship ought

to know, is really a cruel request, for it is asking the counsel in question to do what he has never yet succeeded in accomplishing, and probably never will be able to accomplish! As the day wears away in the Divorce Court, the crowd of spectators momentarily increases; the knocks at the outer door of the court become so frequent, that the life of the policeman on duty there is burdensome to him; the atmosphere inside grows hourly more and more stifling; but the judge works on steadily, until at length the last link in the chain of evidence is completed, and his lordship feels himself able to pronounce the two words, which practically, though not technically, dissolve the marriage tie. 'Rule nisi,' exclaims his Lordship; and thereat there drops from the fair petitioner that matrimonial chain which she found too grievous to be borne.

Perhaps the best time to see Westminster Hall is about two or three o'clock on a fine June afternoon. Parliament is then sitting; and the scene which the hall presents, dotted from top to bottom with groups of visitors, whilst M.P.'s rush to and fro in haste from their parliamentary duties, and pretty country cousins are escorted around it by London friends, under the admiring gaze of numerous members of the great Briefless family, who, attired

in wig, gown, and bands, stroll up and down it, is really pretty.

Before leaving these legal precincts, let us take a peep at a Committee Room of the House of Commons. As the reader probably is aware, if the town of Little Puddington wishes to have water-works of its own instead of being dependent for its water-supply upon its proud rival, Great Swabington, it will have to apply to parliament for a bill, to enable it to obtain its desires. Of course every opposition to the passing of the Little Puddington Water-works Bill will be offered by the inhabitants of Great Swabington, who can scarcely control their indignation at the upstart conduct of the Little Puddingtonians. A committee of the House of Commons will be appointed to enquire into the subject, and counsel will have to be feed, and witnesses brought up on both sides at vast expense—some of whom will of course swear that the supply of water afforded to Little Puddington is ample, whilst others will affirm that it is scandalously deficient.

Half-a-dozen such contests are always going on at Westminster during May and June of any year. Should the reader wish to witness one of them, he must ascend the steps which lead from Westminster Hall to St. Stephen's Hall, and proceed across

the last-named hall till he reaches a flight of steps upon his right. These he must ascend, and he will then find himself in a long corridor, out of which open the doors of numerous committee-rooms. To each committee-room there are two doors, over one of which is inscribed 'Members' Entrance,' and over the other 'Public Entrance.' Turning the handle of this last-named door, the visitor will enter a lofty, well-proportioned, and well-lighted room, the windows of which overlook the river Thames. Round a horse-shoe table he will see seated five gentlemen, the members of the committee of the House of Commons who have been appointed to enquire into the Little Puddington Water-works Bill; and in the hollow of the horse-shoe table are placed two chairs, one for the witness under examination, the other for the short-hand writer, who jots down with unerring accuracy and with marvellous rapidity every word which falls from the witnesses' lips. Fronting the horse-shoe table there stand a narrow table and a row of chairs, designed for the counsel, who, their lucky stars being in the ascendant, have received briefs in the Little Puddington Water-works Bill. All the leading counsel at the parliamentary bar, it is curious to notice, are veritable sons of Anak—it being a standing joke that unless a man is at least six feet in his stockings, he

cannot hope to attain professional distinction at the parliamentary bar. Of course the witnesses are examined, cross-examined, and re-examined before the committee by the counsel engaged in the case, much in the same way as they would be before a judge, save that their ignorance of the laws of evidence often makes the committee admit much testimony which a judge would refuse to accept.

Around the walls of the committee-room are hung roughly executed diagrams of the proposed Little Puddington Water-works, and of the country round about that rising town. The floor of the committee-room into which the public have free access is crowded, you observe, with anxious inhabitants of Little Puddington and Great Swabbington, who watch with breathless interest the witnesses as they give evidence, and look viciously at each other whenever a palpable hit is made by them. So the battle wages often for days, until at length some afternoon the room is cleared ; the committee deliberate in private for a few minutes ; the public are readmitted, and the chairman of the committee announces that the preamble of the Little Puddington Water-works Bill is proved. Of course the Puddingtonians are overjoyed, whereas the inhabitants of Great Swabbington look angrily at their opponents, and vow in their wrath that the

bill shall yet be thrown out by the House of Lords—for, be it known to you, my reader, that before the Little Puddington Water-works Bill can become law, it must undergo, before a committee of the House of Lords, a similar ordeal to that through which it has just passed at the hands of the House of Commons. The inhabitants of Great Swabbington accordingly depart by the night-train from Paddington to that town, and, as they journey homewards, they piously thank God that 'they 'ave a 'ouse of Lords!'

One of the most amusing incidents which can occur in a committee-room is when a division is called in the House of Commons during a sitting of the committee. Bells are at once set ringing by electricity in each committee-room, to announce the fact of the division being called, and as only two minutes are allowed for members to reach the House of Commons from the committee-rooms, not a moment is to be lost. The instant, therefore, that the division-bell begins to ring in the committee-room, the counsel who is examining a witness drops into his seat as though shot, and each member of the committee, clutching his hat, runs for his life from the room. Of course the young and active members arrive in time to vote, but the old and corpulent usually come up only to see the door

of the house banged in their faces—the result of which is that the inhabitants of Stoke Pogis observe with displeasure that ‘the name of their old and esteemed member’ (to quote the words of the ‘Stoke Pogis Observer’ in recording the fact) ‘does not appear in the division-list of last Tuesday, as we hoped it would have done, amongst those who supported the cause of the constitution in these present troublous times;’ &c. Such are some of the scenes which are at present daily occurring in Westminster Hall. Before long, however, as the reader probably knows, the courts of law will be removed to the new Palace of Justice, which is to be reared upon the Carey Street site; and when this is accomplished, the legal glories of centuries will have departed from Westminster Hall.

ON CIRCUIT.

WHY I go circuit I am at a loss to explain. I never get any briefs ; going circuit costs me a great deal of money ; it takes me out of London (which I love), and necessitates my remaining in various provincial towns (which I hate) for several weeks in each spring and summer ; it compels me to leave my cosy chambers in the Temple, and to locate myself in stuffy lodgings in stupid country towns, for which, moreover, I am charged by the proprietors prices which would be deemed extortionate in a Doncaster innkeeper on the eve of the St. Leger. Yielding to bar etiquette (to which I am a martyr), I am not allowed, whilst on circuit, to dine at a public restaurant, or in the coffee-room of an inn. I am therefore compelled either to sit down to a melancholy dinner of (of course) chops in my own lodgings, or else to dine with the rest of my professional brethren at the bar mess. If I adopt the last-named course, I become a victim to

the stories of old Jawkins as to how he once heard Quirk, Q.C., bully the Lord Chief-Justice, and how the Lord Chief-Justice told Quirk that he ought to pay more respect to the office which he (the L. C. J.) held; whereupon Quirk responded that he had every respect for the office—leaving it, of course, to be gracefully implied that he had none for the then occupant of it; &c.

During dinner, I am compelled to drink either sour claret, which I am sure never saw the shores of France, or fruity port, which it is equally certain never passed the custom-house of Portugal. As I drink these beverages, a melancholy conviction steals over me that I am slowly sowing the ineradicable seeds of gout in my constitution, and that, could the comptrollers of my circuit mess be but induced to devote the contents of the circuit casks of wine towards laying the dust in the streets of Hammerham (which is the dustiest town upon my circuit), my children and my children's children would have reason to rise up and call them blessed. During the day, moreover, whilst on circuit, it is my melancholy lot to sit in courts which seem to have been constructed upon the principle of keeping all the bad air *in*, and all the good air *out*—a circumstance which will, I have no doubt, develop sooner or later any incipient germs of consumption

which there may be lurking in my constitution. As I sit daily in this horrible atmosphere, I am compelled also to wear a wig, which tickles my head, and which has already led to my becoming prematurely bald; a pair of bands, which choke me round the throat; and a stuff gown, which, during warm weather, makes me feel as if I were sitting in a vapour-bath. I am doomed, moreover, to submit hourly to the mortification of beholding Tompkins (who was a freshman when I was in my third year at college, and whose Greek prose, I have the authority of the Rev. Dr. Dryasdust, the head of our college, for stating, was 'nauseous stuff') coming into court with a bagful of briefs, whilst I am compelled to sit in the back benches poring over 'Roscoe's Nisi Prius,' in the vain hope of inducing some attorney to believe that I am looking up a knotty point of law upon which my 'opinion' has been sought.

Although I have never had any briefs of my own on circuit, I once 'held' a defence brief for old Jawkins. Upon that occasion, I defended, with all the eloquence of which I was master, an old woman who was charged with pocket-picking. Facts, however, were too strong for me; the jury found a verdict of guilty, and, as it was the old harridan's seventeenth conviction, the judge—very properly, as *I* thought—sentenced her to penal

servitude for seven years. The wicked old wretch, however, instead of acquiescing in her just punishment, stooped down as she was leaving the dock, pulled off both her shoes, sent one of them whizzing at the judge's head, and the other (I presume in grateful acknowledgment of my services on her behalf) at *mine*. The shoe aimed at his lordship's head missed its mark ; but the heel of the one which she threw at *my* head struck me just below the right eye ; and the mark of that blow I shall carry with me to my grave. From that day to this, I have never received another brief on circuit.

'Then I wonder you keep on going circuit !' exclaims some impatient reader. Well, I have often wondered myself at my doing so (to tell the truth) ; and I can only account for it by attributing it to the operation of that curious law of habit, which seems to compel people, when they have once got into the way of doing certain things, to keep on doing them. For this reason, I suppose, was it, that when, one day last week, my clerk informed me that Mr. Justice Bounceaway and Mr. Baron Bounderby had fixed the following Saturday for the commission-day at Dullboro' (which is the first town on my circuit), I commanded him to at once proceed to my friend Luckaby's chambers in Lamb Court, and acquaint him with the above-

named fact. I further enjoined my clerk to inform Mr. Luckaby that I should go down to Dullboro' by the 2.30 train from Queen's Cross on the day on which the Dullboro' commission was to be opened, and to request Mr. Luckaby to bring two packs of cards with him, in order that he and I might be able to get up a rubber with some men on our circuit upon our road down to Dullboro.'

Dullboro' is situated—as I know by the cost of my railway ticket—fully two hundred miles from London. It is a sleepy little cathedral town, and is reputed to possess no fewer than thirteen distinct social grades of society, running from the dean to the beadle. No one, it is needless to say, who may chance to be born in one of the lower social grades in Dullboro', is ever so far lost to decency as to attempt to know any one who moves in a grade superior to his own. At Dullboro', Her Majesty's judges, when they arrive there on circuit, are received with every mark of distinction by the local authorities. As soon as their lordships descend from the carriage which has conveyed them from London, they are escorted by the High-sheriff of Dullboro'shire to a handsome carriage, emblazoned with purple and gold, and drawn by four prancing horses ; in which equipage they proceed—heralded by trumpeters, who give

forth a dismal sound—to the courts of assize, to open the commission for the county of Dullboro'-shire. Then they are driven—still attended by the High-sheriff, who is bound to be in attendance upon them as long as they remain in his county—to the castle of Dullboro', where they stay during their sojourn in Dullboro'-shire. From the castle, after a short interval, their lordships are driven to the cathedral, where they attend divine service, and are solemnly escorted by the cathedral clergy to and from their seats in the stalls.

What the ceremonial known as 'opening the commission' may be, I confess that I am unable to say, for during the whole of my circuit life I have never had curiosity enough to induce me to attend it. I believe, however, that it consists mainly in the reading of a proclamation by V. R. 'against vice and immorality.' This proclamation, I have been given to understand, is of portentous length, and, sternly enjoins all Her Majesty's subjects to abstain from playing at cards or dice either in public or in their own homes, and commands every subject of the Queen to go to his or her parish church every Sunday. Could the full meaning of the first-named of these two injunctions be but fully understood by Her Majesty's Dullboro' subjects, I fancy that it would cause them no little

surprise. Fortunately, however, for their peace of mind, whatever meaning there may be in the proclamation is so wrapped up in a legal fog of words, that its public reading becomes a most innocuous process. After this ceremony of 'opening the commission' has been gone through, the judges usually adjourn the court till next morning, when the real business of the assizes commences.

Meanwhile, at the Dullboro' railway station confusion reigns supreme. As soon as their lordships have got clear off the platform on their way to the High-sheriff's carriage, a wild rush of passengers is made to the luggage-van. Eminent Q.C.s, rising 'juniors,' portly clerks, are seen struggling together furiously for the possession of their personal effects. A sort of free fight comes off for the possession of each passenger's luggage as it emerges from the van. Portmanteaus, red bags, book-boxes, blue bags, hat-boxes, wig-cases, and trunks descend in a perfect cataract from the van to the platform. 'That's Sergeant Growler's bag!' 'No, it isn't; it's mine!' 'Do give me that book-box of Mr. Quirk's. All his law-books are in it, and he's in the first case to-morrow!' 'Mr. Quirk be hanged! He must wait his turn though he *is* a "silk!"' Such are the cries which, for the space of well nigh half an hour, ring through the air upon

the Dullboro' platform. The advent of some sixty gentlemen (to say nothing of their clerks), accompanied by piles of luggage, effectually turns the heads of the two Dullboro' porters, who are little accustomed to such influxes of travellers.

Having at last, however, succeeded in acquiring possession of my portmanteau and blue bag, another disagreeable incident of circuit life presents itself. It becomes necessary for me to find lodgings. But why not drive to an hotel? asks the intelligent reader. Why not, indeed! Because my doing so would be a high crime and misdemeanour against the etiquette of my circuit. The rule upon my circuit as to this particular matter is strict—every barrister must live in lodgings whilst on circuit, and not at an hotel. This rule, I may here observe, has been framed by the wisdom of our ancestors—which far be it from me to impugn—and its object is to avoid the horribly contaminating influence which could not fail to be communicated from an attorney to a barrister should they both chance to meet whilst staying at the same hotel. Whatever the intelligent reader may think of the wisdom of this rule, it *is* the rule upon my circuit, and so I must at once proceed, upon my arrival at Dullboro', to hunt out lodgings. This is a fearsome business. Dullboro' is most irregularly built, and covers an

immense space of ground. Many of the houses in it stand back from the main street, down curious little dark entries, into which it requires no small amount of faith to penetrate. Although I am unable to congratulate the inhabitants of Dullboro' upon the architecture of these houses, I *am* able to felicitate them upon possessing a full appreciation of the market value of two spare rooms in them during assize times. The circuit only remains at Dullboro' from Saturday to Wednesday; and for the hire, for that space of time, of a stuffy back-parlour and a miserably small bedroom, I am compelled to pay the sum of two guineas. Each meal which I consume is also charged at a tariff which, considering the primitive nature of the repast, would be dear at a West-end hotel.

Every circuit in England has its mess, and exclusion from the mess of his circuit is social death to any barrister. Exclusion from the mess is, of course, designed as a means of punishment for men who do not obey the circuit rules. For example, when a man is called to the bar, he usually selects that circuit upon which most of his friends reside, and where, consequently, he has the best chance of obtaining business. Should he, however, fail in obtaining work upon the circuit which he first selects, and afterwards desire to choose another, he

can do so, provided that not more than three years have elapsed from the time of his joining the circuit which he at first selected. Should more than three years, however, have elapsed, he is then bound to stick to the circuit which he originally chose. Should a man determine, however, to change his circuit after three years, in defiance of professional etiquette, he, of course, can do so—only the mess of the circuit which he afterwards joined would refuse to elect him into it, and the mess of his original circuit would promptly expel him from it. Observe, theoretically, there is nothing, I believe, to prevent a barrister, if he chose to do so, from travelling to every circuit town in England—from Exeter to Newcastle ; but if he were to do so, he would be marked by his brethren as a professional black-sheep of the deepest dye. Every man's hand would be against him ; no circuit mess would elect him as a member ; and the leaders upon each circuit could effectually ruin him by declining (as they infallibly would do) to hold briefs with him. So strictly is the trade-union rule, which compels each barrister to go only one circuit, obeyed, that, I believe, not a single instance has ever been known of its being broken.

According to professional etiquette, a man may, however, accept a brief upon a circuit other than


his own, providing that he be 'specially retained' to do so. Being specially retained, means, that the man, if he be a Q.C., has a fee of three hundred guineas upon his brief; and if he be a 'junior'—that is, not a Q.C.—he must have a fee of fifty guineas marked on his brief. If the man, also, who is specially retained be a Q.C., then another Q.C. belonging to the circuit upon which the case is tried must also be retained with him. By bar custom, any man who has filled, or is filling, the office of Her Majesty's Attorney or Solicitor General never goes circuit unless he be specially retained to do so. In the case, therefore, of a man who has gone, say, the Western circuit for his whole life, has obtained the lead upon it, and afterwards holds, perhaps for a few months only, the office of Solicitor-General, it is a serious deprivation to him to be for ever after deprived of the right of going his own circuit. Upon the other hand, he can, of course, comfort himself with the thought, that any man who has filled the office of Solicitor-General is certain to be, sooner or later, made a judge.

The other circuit rules are almost too numerous for me to mention. Here, however, are a few of them. No barrister must enter an assize town before the commission-day—the object of this rule (which is a rational one) being to prevent any

barrister 'bagging' a lot of briefs by making an earlier start than his neighbours. No barrister must dine with an attorney (unless he be a relation) whilst on circuit; and Lord Eldon declared, that in his day it was a high crime and misdemeanour for a barrister, whilst on circuit, even to dance with an attorney's daughter at the assize ball! I think, however, that this rule is now so far relaxed, that there is nothing to prevent Mr. Briefless requesting the honour of Miss Redtape's hand in the next set of Lancers—providing that she be young and pretty. If old and ugly, I need scarcely say that the most sinister motives would be imputed to Mr. Briefless by his professional brethren. No barrister—and this rule, of course, applies everywhere as well as on circuit—must 'tout' for business, or, in fact, ask for business in any way from an attorney. It is needless, however, for me to say that there are always well-meaning friends of Mr. Briefless whose friendship for him exceeds their prudence, and who *will* ask old Mr. Redtape, or Messrs. Quirk, Gammon, and Snap to give young Mr. Briefless a brief in that heavy case (which is set down for hearing at the next Dullboro' assizes) of *Tompkins v. the Dean and Chapter of Dullboro'*. It is also, I hope, quite needless for me to say that such unprofessional conduct upon the part of his friends

fills the breast of Mr. Briefless (when he hears of it) with the most poignant regret. No words of his can express his annoyance that 'his friends *will* do this sort of thing for him ;' and the satisfaction with which he beholds the inscription upon his brief, 'Mr. Briefless 15 guās. Consōn 1 guā. with you Mr. Quirk, Q.C.,' is even dimmed by the recollection of the manner in which the brief was obtained for him !

Upon my circuit another curious rule is, that no one must carry a bag for his briefs into court unless it be a red one ; and that no one must purchase a red bag, but must wait till a Q.C. presents him with one. The theory of this, of course, is, that the Q.C., observing that the rising junior has more briefs than he can well carry about with him in his hands, takes an opportunity of expressing to him his pleasure at the sight, and presents him with a red bag to carry them in. Upon some circuits, I believe, men who are not lucky enough to possess red bags are allowed to carry blue ones into court in place of them ; but such conduct upon my circuit would be visited by a fine of one guinea for each offence, which sum would go to the mess wine-fund. No Q.C. ever goes sessions after obtaining his silk gown, unless he be specially retained to do so ; and no Q.C. ever travels circuit without being accom-



panied by his clerk. In the old coaching-days, no barrister whilst on circuit was allowed to travel by the public coach—he was obliged either to ride on horseback or in a postchaise. Now-a-days, whilst on circuit every barrister must travel first-class. As I have said already, if a barrister chose to remain outside the mess of his circuit, he could break one or all of these rules. I know, however, of no instance in which a man has attempted to do so. That exclusion from the circuit mess is regarded as a serious matter, is proved by the fact, that although the mess fees are somewhat heavy, still every barrister, no matter how poor he may be, pays them. How far the *surveillance* which the circuit mess exercises over its members is a benefit or an evil, goes beyond my present purpose to discuss. It is noteworthy, however, that, upon my own circuit at all events, the clerks who accompany their masters round circuit have a mess of their own, and that many similarly stringent rules to those of their masters have been devised by them, disobedience to which is punished by expulsion from *their* mess.

Every circuit in England annually appoints two of its members to be its Attorney-General and Solicitor-General. Some circuits also possess officers whose duties may be known by the titles which

they bear, namely, 'Poet Laureate' and 'Master of the Revels.' Once or twice during each circuit, what is termed 'Grand Court' takes place. What passes at Grand Court I am forbidden to reveal by a ceremonial observance so awful in its nature that the fabled red-hot poker of our friends the Freemasons literally 'pales its ineffectual fires' before what *I* went through before being permitted to attend Grand Court upon my circuit. Each Circuit court has its 'records,' which are carefully kept, and which extend back for the last two hundred years or so. The names of some of the most eminent judges in the land are to be found in the records of my circuit in connection with circuit jokes and pranks which, if I felt myself at liberty to reveal—which I do not—would cause my readers no little amusement, and those eminent judges no small dismay.

The other towns upon my circuit, besides Dullboro', are Wastford, Daleham, Hitterton, Greenpool, and Hammerham. In each of these towns the judges are received with similar ceremonies to those which I have described at Dullboro'. The business at Dullboro' is always small, and is almost invariably concluded within the four days allotted to it. Wastford and Daleham are two small towns at which we don't stay more than three days each ;

but at Hitterton, Greenpool, and Hammerham the business is exceedingly heavy. At each of the two last-named places it is my melancholy lot to sit in court for a fortnight at a stretch. If the intelligent reader thinks it is an easy thing to sit for twelve successive days in the back benches of a court doing nothing, let me tell him that an eminent Q.C. who is engaged in nearly every case on my circuit told me he was far more exhausted by sitting in court doing nothing when he first came circuit as a junior, than he now is when he is actively engaged in business all day long in court.

So heavy is the business at the last three towns upon my circuit, that I have known the judges to sit from nine o'clock in the morning till ten o'clock at night, in order to finish it in time to open the commission at the appointed day at the next town on circuit. If this were not done punctually, of course the business of the whole circuit would be thrown into inextricable confusion. Should the judges, however, not be able to finish the business at Hitterton in time to open the commission at Greenpool upon the appointed day, one of the Q.C.s on circuit who is not overburdened with business is sent forward to do so. Of course he is received with exactly the same ceremony as the judges themselves would be ; and it is a fact (such

is the weakness of human nature) that there are Q.C.s to be found who would gladly undertake this duty, including the listening to a long sermon at Greenpool parish church, for the pleasure of being looked upon for a few hours by the ignorant vulgar as a veritable judge. In olden days, it was the custom for the high-sheriff and many of the county magistrates to meet the judges a mile or two outside of the assize town, and escort them in splendid procession to the assize courts. Now, however, in this utilitarian age, the railway train brings Her Majesty's judges into the heart of the county town, and they are escorted to and from the assize courts by a posse of policemen. Nay, so negligent now-a-days are some of the high sheriffs, that I remember reading, a year or two ago, in the newspapers how a high-sheriff of a certain county was sternly reprimanded and severely fined by a judge for suffering his (the judge's) carriage-door to be opened by an hostler in his shirt-sleeves !

Socially, the men on my circuit have a tendency to split up into three divisions. Firstly, the leaders ; secondly, the middle-aged juniors, like myself ; and thirdly—as we men in middle-life love to call them—the 'extreme juniors.' The 'extreme juniors' I have reason to believe, form, notwithstanding the slighting way in which the other two classes speak

of them, an exceedingly lively body. They are too young to be anything but light-hearted ; and as none of them have any business, they are not envious of each other. Moreover, as most of them go the same sessions, they come to know each other better than we, who only go circuit together, do. Sessions are held four times a year, and the bar rules regarding them are very strict. A man on my circuit who goes to Greenpool sessions, is not allowed to go to Hammerham sessions. Were he to do so, he would be punished by expulsion from the Greenpool sessions mess, and, as a matter of course, the Hammerham sessions men would refuse to elect him into their mess. All men who mean to practise at the bar go sessions as soon as they are called to the bar, and, as a rule, if a man goes sessions steadily for a few years, he is sure to get some briefs. Becoming a leader at sessions, he may thereby come to get briefs on circuit, and even in London.

Up to a few years ago, almost all practising barristers, without any exception, lived in London, and only went to country towns at assize times. Latterly, however, it has become the practice for young barristers, to 'localise,' as it is termed, in such great towns as Greenpool and Hammerham. Here, instead of sitting in Temple chambers wait-

ing for the briefs which never come, they often at once get into practice in the local county courts, and in arbitrations, &c. The tendency of the present age, moreover, clearly is to establish local courts in large towns, and to reserve the law-courts in London as appeal courts for the decision of the points of law which may arise in the local courts. In olden times, when travelling was difficult, there was, no doubt, great convenience in justice being brought, by means of the circuit system, to the very doors of the inhabitants of each county in England. Should local courts, however, be established in all the chief towns of the kingdom, it is far from improbable that a blissful day may arise, even in the lifetime of the present writer, when, in consequence of the total abolition of the circuit system in England, it will not only be unnecessary, but absolutely impossible, for him to go 'on circuit' any more!

A RISING JUNIOR.

MR. PAGE is everywhere spoken of as 'a rising junior,'—some people even going so far as to say of him that he is a risen junior. I observed at the last Greenpool assizes that Mr. Page was 'in' thirty-seven cases out of a cause-list of eighty, which fact sufficiently proves him to be the 'leading junior' on my circuit. Considering that he is only thirty-six years of age, and that he has been scarcely eleven years at the Bar, Mr. Page has undoubtedly achieved a great success in his profession. Yet that success is, after all, not to be wondered at. Mr. Page is a man of great natural ability; he has ever since his college days been anxious to attain success at the Bar; and he has always had a most powerful 'backing' amongst solicitors. Mr. Page has, in truth, never known what it was to be without briefs. His father is the head of the largest firm of solicitors in Greenpool, and upon the very day after that on which young

Page was called to the Bar his first case was sent to him by his father's firm.

Page and I were at Greenpool Grammar-school together, and there, as I can personally testify, he was *facile princeps*. At eighteen he won a scholarship at Trinity College, Cambridge; at twenty-two he came out fourth wrangler of his year; and at four-and-twenty he won a fellowship at his own college. Before Mr. Page, however, had won his Trinity fellowship he had entered at the Temple. During the whole of his time as a law student, it is not too much to say of him that he 'scorned delights and lived laborious days.' He worked early and late at the dingy chambers of the special pleader with whom he read; he marked and annotated cases in the law reports till far on into the night, and till the midnight oil in his student's lamp burned low; yet, notwithstanding all the hard work of the preceding day, he was early next morning at Westminster Hall to hear the arguments in cases in which he (as a pupil) had been engaged; in short, he fagged unceasingly to master all the technicalities of English law. When therefore he was called to the Bar he was qualified by study and training, as very few of his contemporaries were, to attain that success in his profession which he so ardently desired.

On the very first occasion of his attending Greenpool assizes, three briefs were, through his father's interest, given to him. Now it is undoubtedly true that there are many able men at the Bar who, from lack of interest, have never been able to get a fair start in their profession, and who are therefore, through no fault of their own, briefless barristers; but it is also true that no matter how good a 'backing' a man may have at the Bar, nothing but merit can enable him to attain a really high position in his profession. No solicitor—however anxious he may be to push a young barrister—can continue to give him briefs unless the young Hopeful in question shows some power of successfully dealing with them. Mr. Page, however, assuredly had plenty of ability to enable him to make the best use of the chances which his father's position as a leading solicitor in Greenpool gave him.

Mr. Page, as I have already said, received at the first assizes at Greenpool which he attended three briefs, and year by year since then the number of his clients has been gradually extending, until he now receives more briefs at Greenpool assizes than any other junior counsel; and these briefs, be it observed, do not come to him merely from his father's friends, but from clients who have been attracted to him by his growing reputation at the

Bar. Probably very few junior counsel are now making a larger income than Mr. Page is doing, for he has got into the very best class of practice at the Common Law Bar, viz., into the heavy commercial and shipping cases which are tried at Guildhall, in the city of London, and at Greenpool assizes.

In addition to the income which Mr. Page derives from his professional fees he has another source of profit in the persons of some seven pupils, who read with him in his chambers in London. Each of these pupils has paid to Mr. Page a fee of one hundred guineas for the privilege of being allowed for one year to read all the cases which come into Mr. Page's chambers.

Mr. Page's 'business chambers' are in Parchment Buildings, Temple, but his 'residence chambers' are in Lamb Court, Temple. In his 'residence chambers' (which are on the third floor of Lamb Court) Mr. Page has lived for the last twelve years. I have been often in them, and I do not think that, during the whole of that space of time, their aspect has altered in the slightest degree. They are very handsomely furnished, and it is a whim of Mr. Page—for like all bachelors he is full of megrims—to replace every article which may chance to be worn out in his chambers by another of precisely

the same shape, pattern, and colour. Accordingly in Mr. Page's 'residence chambers' nothing ever seems to change. The carpet upon the floor, the paper upon the walls, the rug before the fire, the very tablecloths upon the tables, seem always to be the same. In the book-cases there stand—for Mr. Page has a fine taste in literature—a splendid collection of books all sumptuously bound. You will not, however, find a single law book in Mr. Page's 'residence chambers,' for another whim of his is that he cannot endure the sight of a law book in Lamb Court.

But stay; in the far corner of that book-case near the fire do I not discern a very stumpy volume labelled 'Blackstone's Commentaries'? Mr. Page, then, it appears, makes an exception in the case of the famous work which Mr. Lowe¹ is so anxious that every Englishman should read? Not so, my reader. Were you to open that stumpy volume you would find inside it—about fifty of the most lovely Havannah cigars upon which your eye ever rested! What whim induces Mr. Page to label his cigar-box, 'Blackstone's Commentaries' I know not, but his invariable practice is when a friend visits him for the first time to place the volume in question in his hands and ask him whether he

¹ Vide Mr. Lowe's Speech at Huddersfield, Nov. 1871.

admires its binding? The guest takes it into his hands, opens it, and lo! he beholds what I have told you. In a cunningly-contrived wine-bin in Mr. Page's chambers, too, there lie divers bottles of Steinberg Cabinet and Perrier Jouet and Lafitte—which upon a hot summer's evening in London do your eyes good to see.

Upon the walls of Mr. Page's sitting-room there hang several fine paintings, one of which, by Hook, of a wonderful sea scene, cost its possessor 1,000*l*. Another represents a scene in the Scotch highlands, with the mist swirling down the hill sides, both mist and hills being painted as, I believe, only one man—and he the painter of the picture—*can* paint them. Another water-colour painting represents a scene in the 'sunny South,' which Mr. Page visited a few years ago. All of the pictures represent outdoor scenes; 'for,' Mr. Page will tell you, 'it does my eyes good to turn from the brick walls of Lamb Court to these pictures which bring sea and mountain before me. It rests me, and does me good in a quite indescribable way.'

I daresay some of my readers have by this time come to the conclusion that Mr. Page is a heartless Sybarite, studying only his own ease and comfort. Ah! my hasty reader, 'judge not, and thou shalt not be judged.' Were I writing the

history of Mr. Page's private life instead of merely sketching for you his career as a rising barrister, I could tell you such a tale about him as would make you pity instead of blame him. But this reminds me that I am wandering from my subject, which, as I have just said, is to sketch for you Mr. Page's career as 'a rising junior,' not to relate to you the sad history of what befell him six or seven years ago. Let us therefore leave his residence chambers in Lamb Court, and do you, my reader, come with me to his 'business chambers' in Parchment Buildings.

Mr. Page's 'business chambers' are upon the ground floor—indeed it is a matter of absolute necessity that 'business chambers' in the Temple should be either upon the ground or first floors, inasmuch as middle-aged and plethoric attorneys have a not unnatural objection to clambering up three pairs of stairs. Mr. Page's 'business chambers' comprise three rooms. The first room which we enter is the clerks' room, and in it there are seated two clerks, one of whom is a man of about thirty years of age, and who has been Mr. Page's clerk ever since he was called to the Bar; the other is a small boy of fifteen, who partakes to the full of the terrible precocity which is so characteristic of London boys at that age.

The second room, into which we pass, is occupied by Mr. Page's seven pupils, each one of whom, as I have already mentioned, has paid him a fee of one hundred guineas for the privilege of reading with him for the space of one year. They help Mr. Page, too, in various ways, by looking up decided cases, and also by drawing his pleadings, etc., for him.

A whole chapter might be written upon Mr. Page's pupils, but as it is, a very few words must suffice to describe them. No. 1 is an Oxford man, who won the Eldon Law scholarship, and who, being both clever and ambitious, is working very hard at law. He is indeed quite a legal *gourmand*, for he is at Mr. Page's chambers every morning by ten o'clock, and he never quits them till nightfall. Nos. 2 and 3 are two Cambridge men, both of whom contented themselves with taking 'poll' degrees there, and who now read law with Mr. Page in a very easy fashion. Sometimes they attend chambers with tolerable regularity, at others they fail to put in an appearance for days together. No. 4 is a very sprucely-attired young gentleman, who always walks into Mr. Page's chambers looking as though he had just stepped out of a band-box. His chief ambition in life is to be the best-dressed man of his 'set,' in which very modest aim he is, I think we

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may concede, tolerably successful. No. 5 is a slow, heavy, plodding man, who, after three years of coaching, and after enduring much mental anguish in the process, managed to come out 'wooden spoon' at Cambridge. No. 6 is a lanky, ill-dressed, rough-looking, Scotchman (with a terrible brogue), who having, at the age of twenty, 'taken out' his A.M. degree at 'Old Aberdeen' has come up to London (at twenty-one) with the full determination of attaining the highest honours of the law. He obtained several college prizes whilst at Aberdeen, and he is (between ourselves) much astonished to find that the news of his academical successes has not penetrated into the world of London. No. 7 is—but lo ! how shall I describe him whom I have never seen and whom even Mr. Page has only beheld once ? He came three months ago to Mr. Page, paid his fee of one hundred guineas, and then disappeared. In vain has Mr. Page written to him requesting him to come to chambers. The fact is, I believe, that the young Hopeful in question simply wishes Mr. Page to give him a certificate of his having read in his chambers for one year, so as to thereby enable him to be called to the Bar. That certificate, however, Mr. Page, who is a man of honour, will not give him. Indeed, Mr. Page has to-day written to him telling him so, and

offering at the same time to return him his fee. What effect this line of conduct may produce upon No. 7, time alone can show.

Let us now pass into the third room, in which sits Mr. Page himself, at a small desk placed upon a square table, in the centre of the room. Around the walls there stand bookcases filled with volumes of law reports, and legal text books, all uniformly bound in that most ugly of bindings known as 'legal calf.' Upon Mr. Page's table there are piled literally heaps of law papers, all tied up with red tape. Let us glance at the inscriptions upon some of these papers. In every instance, we shall find that each bundle of papers has, marked upon the outside of it, the name of the court in which the cause is pending, the name of the cause itself, and Mr. Page's own name—which last is always written immediately above the fee marked upon the papers. Upon the papers, too, there is invariably recorded the name of the firm of solicitors who have sent them to Mr. Page.

Here, for example, are a few of the inscriptions upon some of the bundles of papers which lie upon Mr. Page's table. 'Howler *v.* Growler, case for opinion, Mr. Page 2 guās.' 'Thompson *v.* Jones, brief to show cause; Mr. Page, 5 guās; with you Mr. Quirk, Q.C.' 'Harrison *v.* the Great Loam-

shire Railway Co., brief for the defendants ; Mr. Page, 25 guās ; with you Sir L. Bigwig, Q.C.' 'Jack *v.* Jill, demurrer to take notes ; Mr. Page, 5 guās ; with you Mr. Ferret, Q.C. to argue.' 'Jones *v.* Smith, to draw points ; Mr. Page, 3 guās.' 'Blackman *v.* Softman, instructions for declaration ; Mr. Page, 3 guās.' 'Green *v.* Smith, instructions for pleas ; Mr. Page, 2 guās.' 'Robson *v.* Corp'n. of Greenpool ; to draw appeal case ; Mr. Page, 5 guās.' 'Slowman *v.* Fastman, to draw interrogatories ; Mr. Page, 2 guās.' 'Benjamin *v.* Solomon, to advise on evidence ; Mr. Page, 2 guās.' 'Jackson *v.* Johnson, to attend summons at chambers ; Mr. Page, 2 guās.' &c. &c.

Now let us look a little more closely into each of these bundles of papers. The first bundle which we took up was that marked 'Howler *v.* Growler, case for opinion.' This is, it appears, an action on a breach of contract to supply the plaintiff with a certain kind of rope. The 'points,' however, in the case, Mr. Page finds run rather fine, so he hands it over to pupil No. 1, telling him to look up some decided cases (the names of which Mr. Page gives him), and then to come and talk them over with him. After the pupil has done so, Mr. Page will write his 'opinion,' advising the plaintiff whether he has a good cause of action ; and (if so) whether it

would be prudent in him to commence proceedings against the defendant. This 'opinion' will be read by all the pupils who are disposed to take the trouble to do so, and some of them—notably the long Scotchman—will take a full note of it.

Howler *v.* Growler being thus disposed of, Thompson *v.* Jones next claims Mr. Page's attention. This, however, is simply a brief 'to show cause against a rule being made absolute for a new trial,' and as he has a 'leader' in it, and as, moreover, it is not likely to come on for hearing for a few days Mr. Page throws it aside.

In Harrison *v.* the Great Loamshire Railway Co., Mr. Page is junior counsel for the defendants. This is a heavy case with a lot of 'paper' (as barristers say) to be read through in it. The case is, however, to be tried before a special jury, and consequently will not be heard till the end of the present term. Mr. Page, therefore, commands his clerk to take it to the pupil's room, and allow those young gentlemen to improve their minds by reading it.

Jack *v.* Jill is an argument on a 'demurrer'—in other words, upon a purely legal point—and Mr. Page's brief says that he is 'to take notes' of the arguments which his leader, Mr. Ferret, will use. Should Mr. Ferret, however, fail to appear, Mr.

Page will, of course, have to argue the case himself. In this 'demurrer,' moreover, there is a pet 'point' to be decided, which Mr. Page has himself 'raised,' and he therefore puts the brief on the right-hand side of his desk—that being a sign and token to himself, that he means to read *Jack v. Jill* carefully at the first opportunity.

In *Jones v. Smith* Mr. Page has 'to draw points.' The mystery of these 'points' I shall not attempt to explain to the general reader, but shall content myself with observing, that the task of drawing good 'points' is a very delicate one.

In *Blackman v. Softman* Mr. Page has received instructions to draw the 'declaration'¹ for the plaintiff, and in *Green v. Smith* his duty is to draw the 'pleas'¹ for the defendant. As a matter of fact, all the 'declarations' and 'pleas' which are drawn in Mr. Page's chambers, are first written by Mr. Page's

¹ I had, perhaps, better state here what a 'declaration' and what a 'plea' are. In every action brought in the common law courts the plaintiff is obliged to file a 'declaration'—in other words, to state briefly what is the injury of which he complains and for the redress of which he is bringing the action. Within a certain time the defendant is bound to file his 'pleas' in answer to the plaintiff's 'declaration'—in other words, to state briefly what is his defence to the plaintiff's action. Usually the plaintiff next files a 'replication,' denying the truth of the defendant's allegations. The parties are then said to have 'joined issue,' and the case can at once be set down for hearing.

pupils, but then they have of course to be 'settled' by Mr. Page himself, before they are suffered to go out of his chambers. This 'settling' process is often a very tedious one to Mr. Page, and wearies him more than if he had drawn the 'declaration' or 'plea' from the very beginning, for himself. Each pupil in chambers draws his 'declarations' and 'pleas' upon what is called draft paper. He is instructed always to leave an interval of about an inch or an inch and a half, between each line of his writing, so that Mr. Page can afterwards correct and interline, and re-interline with ease in the spaces left by the pupil for that purpose. Very often, if the pleading has been badly drawn by the pupil, Mr. Page alters it to such an extent, that when it is finally 'settled' by him, there is not a single word of the pupil's original draft left! The art of framing a good 'declaration,' and also of drawing good 'pleas,' is a very intricate one. It is, however, so technical in its character, that it is impossible for me to give the reader any idea of the skill and ability which are frequently displayed by Mr. Page in 'settling' the 'declarations' and 'pleas' which are sent out of his chambers.

In *Robson v. the Corporation of Greenpool*, Mr. Page has to draw the case on appeal from the Court of Admiralty to the Judicial Committee of

the Privy Council, and he has to state therein the 'reasons' which have led to the appeal being brought. That to do this well is a task of some difficulty, will I think be readily apparent, even to the lay-reader.

Two or three other bundles of papers still remain to claim our attention. In *Slowman v. Fastman* Mr. Page has to draw interrogatories, i.e. written queries which are to be answered by the defendant in writing prior to the trial. In *Benjamin v. Solomon* Mr. Page has to advise on evidence—in other words, he has to tell his client what witnesses it will be desirable for him to call to give evidence at the trial of his case before the jury at the next Green-pool Assizes. This is work which—it will be readily understood even by the general reader—calls for the exercise of both foresight and judgment upon Mr. Page's part.

The last bundle of papers which we take up is that marked *Jackson v. Johnson*. In this case Mr. Page has to attend a summons at chambers to administer interrogatories to the defendants. I have already explained that interrogatories are written questions which can be put by either of the parties to the other before the trial of the case in which they are antagonists. Now it must be obvious that it would never do to allow the parties

to an action to catechise each other at will before their case comes on for hearing, because if they were permitted to do so, the defendant might by putting 'fishing' interrogatories to the plaintiff, find out what the plaintiff's case was, and thereby be enabled to shape his own case to meet it. Before, therefore, interrogatories can be delivered by either party to the other, a judge's order to administer them must be obtained.

For the purpose of granting these orders, and also for other objects which I need not particularise, one of the Judges attends daily at Judge's chambers in Rolls Court, from twelve till four o'clock. A curious scene is that witnessed between these hours at Judge's chambers. Let us accompany Mr. Page there to-day, and see it for ourselves. We know that Mr. Page's 'instructions,' in the case of *Jackson v. Johnson*, are to attend at Judge's chambers to obtain leave to administer interrogatories to the defendant. As Mr. Page thinks that there may possibly be some objection made to one of the interrogatories which he has prepared, he puts a volume of the 'Law Journal,' in which a case in point is reported, under his arm, crosses Fleet Street, and speedily finds himself in the anteroom to that in which Mr. Baron Bounderby (who chances to be the judge at chambers to-day) is sitting.

Now it so happens that Mr. Page does not know by what particular counsel or solicitor his application to administer the interrogatories will be opposed. He therefore, so soon as he enters the outer room of the Judge's chambers—in which there is gathered together a motley crowd of barristers, attorneys, and attorney's clerks—shouts out at the top of his voice 'Jackson and Johnson!' As at least half-a-dozen other people are screaming out simultaneously at the top of *their* voices 'Snooks and Harrison,' 'Jones and the River Thames Commissioners,' etc. etc., Mr. Page's first cry of 'Jackson and Johnson' meets with no response. Upon a second repetition, however, Mr. Gammon, a young attorney, who has just been 'admitted,' sidles up to Mr. Page, and somewhat timidly informs him that 'he is against him in Jackson *v.* Johnson.' 'All right,' replies Mr. Page, 'so if you're ready, Mr. Gammon, we may as well try and squeeze our way in,' and they thereupon place themselves amid a crowd of men, all of whom are waiting for the door which leads into Baron Bounderby's room to be opened.

During the interval in which they are waiting, prior to being admitted into Baron Bounderby's presence, Mr. Page converses affably with Mr. Gammon upon various topics. Young Mr. Gammon,

however, truth to tell, is somewhat vague in his replies to Mr. Page's remarks. He eyes suspiciously the volume of the 'Law Journal' which Mr. Page carries under his arm, for he naturally infers that it contains some case which Mr. Page intends to cite before Baron Bounderby in the impending struggle over the interrogatories in *Jackson v. Johnson*. Between ourselves, young Mr. Gammon would give a good deal to know the nature of the case which is about to be sprung upon him by Mr. Page.

At length, however, the door leading into Baron Bounderby's room is opened, and an 'ugly rush' at once takes place into the learned Baron's presence. So soon as five or six persons—amongst whom are Mr. Page and Mr. Gammon—are admitted into the room, Baron Bounderby's clerk slams the door in the face of the struggling mob outside. Baron Bounderby is, you perceive, seated (without wig or gown) on one side of a table, upon which, ranged before him, there lie two or three books of practice. He catches sight of Mr. Page at once, nods kindly to him—for Baron Bounderby has a high opinion of Mr. Page's ability—and motions to him to take a chair opposite to him. Young Mr. Gammon, however, you observe, does not seat himself, for although attorneys, can appear in cases before a judge at chambers, yet a delicate distinction is

drawn between them and counsel. A barrister is always invited to take a chair by the judge—a solicitor never!

‘Well, Mr. Page,’ says Baron Bounderby, in a quick, sharp, unceremonious tone (which would astonish people who never beheld a judge save in court), ‘what are you here about?’

‘Case—Jackson and Johnson,’ replies Mr. Page, in brief, jerky sentences; ‘I appear plaintiff—leave administer interrogatories,—cause of action, assault, and false imprisonment.’

‘Let me see the interrogatories,’ says Baron Bounderby sharply. Mr. Page at once hands them to his lordship, and the learned baron runs his small ferret-like eyes over them in half-a-minute.

‘Well,’ says he, at the end of his rapid scrutiny, suddenly turning upon Mr. Gammon, ‘what have *you* to say against them?’

‘Well, my lord,’ replies poor Gammon, ‘I should submit that the sixth interrogatory is of too “fishing” a nature?’

At these words Mr. Page slowly opens the volume of the ‘Law Journal’ which he has brought with him from his chambers, and poor Gammon feels that the moment has come for the mine to be sprung upon him.

‘A precisely similar interrogatory, my lord,’ says

Mr. Page, 'was allowed in the case of *Glover v. Glover*, which is reported in the volume of the "Law Journal," which I hold in my hands.'

'Of course it was!' growls old Bounderby. 'I know the case well enough. Have you anything to say,' continues the learned Baron, addressing Mr. Gammon, 'against my following the judgment in *Glover and Glover*? Because, if you can't show me any distinction between the present case and *Glover and Glover*, of course I shall follow *Glover and Glover*, and allow these interrogatories.'

It appears that young Mr. Gammon is *not* able to show Baron Bounderby any distinction between the present case and *Glover v. Glover*, and the matter is therefore at once decided by the learned judge's 'allowing' the interrogatories. Mr. Page vacates his chair, which is instantly occupied by another counsel engaged in another case. To this new case Baron Bounderby at once applies his mind, as he will continue to do to successive cases till four o'clock—by which time he will have got through as much work as most men do in a week.

Mr. Page, immediately after quitting Baron Bounderby's presence, returns to his chambers, and as this is one of the few days in which he has nothing 'on' in court, he devotes himself to clearing

off the arrears of his work in chambers. He 'settles' some half-a-dozen 'declarations,' 'pleas,' etc., and then prepares himself for a 'consultation,' which he is to have with Sir L. Bigwig, in a case which is to be heard to-morrow, and in which he knows full well that he shall have to 'coach' his eminent leader in two or three knotty points of law which occur in it.

At length, however, though not till nearly eight o'clock, Mr. Page brings his day's work to a close, and as he walks westwards, to take his solitary dinner at the Oxford and Cambridge Club in Pall Mall, he feels thoroughly fagged out. After dinner Mr. Page returns to his 'residence chambers,' and though it is now nearly eleven o'clock, instead of going to bed, he proceeds slowly to attire himself in evening dress. The fact is that Mr. Page is invited to-night to a reception at Lady Wastdale's house, and weary though he is at the end of his day's work, he feels that he *must* go and show himself, even though it be for only a few minutes in her ladyship's rooms.

Lady Wastdale is one of those ladies who (without the elective franchise) manage to exercise no small amount of influence in the political world. Some two or three years ago it chanced that Mr. Page was able to do her ladyship a great service.

Ever since that time he has been a *protégé* of Lady Wastdale's, and she has vowed to him that, at the next election, he shall be returned as member of Parliament for Cotton-cum-Barley, in which borough her husband possesses great interest. It is for this reason that Mr. Page feels that he *must* go to Lady Wastdale's house to-night, and he therefore, though with much groaning, slowly proceeds to attire himself in evening dress.

'Haven't I read somewhere,' he moodily mutters to himself as he is dressing, 'of a King who, not wanting to go somewhere, sent his boots instead? How I should like,' he remarks, 'to send *mine* to Lady Wastdale's to-night! only as I'm not a Crowned Head, her ladyship would probably fail to see the point of the joke.' Thus soliloquising, Mr. Page continues to dress, till, as he wriggles into his shirt, his thoughts take another turn. 'What a blessing studs are!' he suddenly exclaims, as he contemplates with satisfaction his shirt front; 'they make mankind independent of buttons, and so have removed one of the ills of life. Women now-a-days,' continues Mr. Page, 'say that their duty is not to sew on buttons, or to provide cold-mutton for the family dinner. They object (the women say) to "the buttons and cold-mutton" theory of their existence.

Well, thank goodness !' remarks Mr. Page, 'the extensive use of studs will soon enable men not to trouble the women any longer upon the subject of buttons ; and I am not without hope,' Mr. Page proceeds grimly, 'that a judicious use of Australian mutton (which is imported, I believe, ready cooked) may shortly prevent us men having to trouble the women to provide cold mutton for our dinners. The women will then' (Mr. Page turns down the lamp as he speaks, and feels rapidly in his pockets to see whether he has got his purse, his door-key, and his pocket handkerchief) 'be enabled to cultivate their intellects to the full. And don't I wish,' concludes Mr. Page as he bangs the outer door of his chambers after him, 'that I had a wife who could argue that insurance case in banc for me to-morrow !' With which benevolent aspiration Mr. Page walks forth into the Strand, hails a hansom, and drives off rapidly to Lady Wastdale's house.

'It will be two o'clock A.M.,' he goes on with a groan as he sinks back into the hansom, 'before I get back to chambers. Suppose,' he continues, 'that Lady Wastdale does get me in for Cotton-cum-Barley ; suppose that I do get silk (which of course I shall do whenever I choose to apply for it) ; sup-

pose even that some day I become Page C.B.,¹ or Page C.J.,² is the sport worth the candle? Is not the life of an English judge one of the most mill-horse character—one eternal round of sittings in banc, sittings at *nisi prius*, sittings at chambers, sittings at assizes? Shouldn't I get far more pleasure out of my life if I were to give up the Bar, and go and live in some other country than this wretched foggy England? But pshaw! What folly am I talking! Our lots in life are appointed for us, and I must follow out mine—to the end!

So musing, Mr. Page arrives at Lady Wastdale's house, descends from his cab, and speedily mingles with the crowd which is thronging her ladyship's brilliantly-lighted rooms. Whether Mr. Page will eventually become Lord Chief Justice of England, or Lord Chief Baron of the Exchequer, who shall tell? This much, however, is certain—that at present he is neither a happy nor a contented man, though he *is* 'a rising junior.'

¹ Chief Baron.

² Chief Justice.


COUNTRY SESSIONS.

I 'GO' Stoneyshire and Greenpool sessions. I have 'gone' them regularly for the last fifteen years, and, to all appearance, I seem likely to continue to 'go' them for the next fifteen. I wish I could say that my professional success at sessions had been at all commensurate with the perseverance with which I have 'gone' them, but unhappily I can't. Of course every barrister who 'goes' sessions steadily is sure sometimes to get an odd brief or two, and hence it comes to pass that my voice is not absolutely unknown at Stoneyshire Quarter Sessions.

On the last occasion on which I had the honour of addressing a Stoneyshire jury, I replied upon the whole case for the prosecution at such length that I have since been credibly assured—for in the excitement of making my speech I did not, somehow, observe the fact myself—that I succeeded in sending no fewer than five of the jurymen to sleep. My old friend, Rusticus (who is a J.P. for Stoney-

shire, and as such was seated upon the magisterial bench whilst I was addressing the jury upon this memorable occasion), was afterwards kind enough to inform me, when I met him outside of the court, that the address which I had just delivered was the dullest and the most confused oration to which he had ever listened. He was also good enough to observe to me that I appeared to him towards the close of my speech to have so completely lost myself in its labyrinths, that he (Rusticus) whispered to the chairman at Quarter Sessions to beg him to begin to sum up the case to the jury—so as to induce me to think that I had brought my speech to an end !

‘My dear Rusticus,’ I responded, keeping my temper under this stupid joke at my expense in the most admirable way, ‘my dear Rusticus, seeing that at no period of your life could *you* ever manage to utter three consecutive sentences in public, without floundering about in them in the most helpless way, and that upon the solitary occasion on which you contested Stoneyshire, and were *not* returned’ (Rusticus winced), ‘you were obliged to bring down a man from London to make your speeches for you’ (Rusticus winced again), ‘you are no doubt admirably qualified to express an opinion upon the speech which I have just had the honour of delivering in court. The



jury,' I went on, 'to whom it was addressed certainly seemed to me to pay every att——'

'There were five of them asleep!' interrupted Rusticus.

'Call them the seven sleepers at once!' I rejoined.

'No thank you,' responded Rusticus, 'I prefer to be exact. Five was the number. But come,' he continued in a more amiable tone, 'like a good fellow and dine with me (for I am half starved after sitting in that court all day), and don't let us talk any more about that stu—— ahem, very able speech of yours!'

'Confess now, Rusticus,' I replied, as I passed my arm through his, 'that you felt my speech long because you were very hungry.'

'Well,' admitted Rusticus, 'perhaps that might be so!'

Rusticus having confessed thus much, I very willingly went home with him to dinner. The fact, indeed, is that Rusticus is about the last person in the world with whom I should wish to quarrel. When I mention that his claret is undeniable, that his cigars are the best I have ever smoked, that his daughters are two of the prettiest girls in Stonyshire (I ought to have mentioned the young ladies before the claret and cigars, but let *that* pass), the

reader will readily understand that I was by no means wishful to lose my accustomed quarterly dinner with Rusticus at Stoneyshire Hall. I say my accustomed quarterly dinner, for Stoneyshire sessions are held quarterly, and it has for years past been a settled custom that whenever I came to Stoneyshire sessions I should dine with Rusticus at Stoneyshire Hall.

Once a year, too, there is a sessions' ball held in Hillboro' (which, as all the world knows, is the county town of Stoneyshire), and ever since Miss Rusticus and Miss Laura Rusticus 'came out,' I have had the honour of making one of a party, (headed of course by Mr. and Mrs. Rusticus,) from Stoneyshire Hall to attend the sessions' ball.

I may safely say that the sessions' ball is *the* event of the year to all the Hillboro' young ladies. It is always held in the month of October, and as at that time of the year most of the county families are residing in Stoneyshire, the company gathered together at it is more fashionable than might at first be supposed. Last year one duke, two earls, one lord, one baronet and several M.P's, 'attended by the ladies of their families' (to use the words of the *Stoneyshire Sentinel* in recording the event), 'graced the ball room with their presence.'

'Dancing began'—I am still quoting from the

account of last year's ball given in the *Stoneyshire Sentinel*—' at nine o'clock, and was kept up with unflagging spirit till an advanced hour of the morning. Supper (which was served at one A.M.), was supplied by Mrs. Thompson of the "White Hart," and we need scarcely say that the resources of the *cuisine* of that celebrated establishment were taxed to the utmost to produce comestibles worthy of the attention of the distinguished company assembled in the supper room. After ample justice had been done by the guests to the *recherché* repast set before them, dancing was resumed by the ardent votaries of Terpsichore, to the sweet strains discoursed to them by the admirable band of Messrs. Jubal and Son, which was stationed in the gallery at the north end of the town hall. The decorations of the ball room (which were of the most exquisite character) were carried out under the management of Messrs. Buffins and Stuffins (the celebrated upholsterers of Hillboro'), and they certainly reflected the utmost credit upon both of those gentlemen. The company assembled on Tuesday night comprised the *élite* of Stoneyshire society, and amongst them we observed the Duke of Stoneyshire (the Duchess of Stoneyshire, to the great grief of every one, was unable, from indisposition, to accompany her noble husband to the

ball), the Earl and Countess of Hillboro', the Earl of Highbury, and the Ladies A. and M. De Vere, Lord and Lady Monkseaton, Sir Rye Hill, Bart., M.P., Mr. Headingley Hill, M.P., Mr. Gallio, M.P., Mr. Treeve Torrington, M.P., Mrs. Treeve Torrington, and the Misses Treeve Torrington (3), Rev. Canon and the Misses Sloper (2), Dr. Blackman, Mrs. Blackman, and the Misses Blackman (2), the Town Clerk of Hillboro', and Mrs. Worrit, Mr., Mrs., and the Misses A. and L. Languish, Captain Cottew, R.N., Lieutenant Barber, R.N., Major Staggers, Mr. Howler, J.P., Mr. Squaretoes, J.P., Mr. T. Idle¹ (none the worse for his forensic efforts—it gave us pleasure to observe—of the afternoon), Mr. Redtape, Mr. Snapper, Mr. Phunky, Mr. Gammon, and several other members of the Junior Bar attending Stoneyshire sessions, &c. It is scarcely an exaggeration for us to say that (to use the words of England's greatest poet), 'jocund day stood tiptoe on the misty mountain tops,' ere the last guest had vanished from the gay and festive scene which Hillboro' Town Hall presented on last Monday evening.'

¹ The reader's very humble servant. The subsequent allusion to my 'forensic efforts' of course refers to my having sent the five jurymen to sleep that afternoon. If ever I meet the reporter of the *Stoneyshire Sentinel* who wrote those words, I'll !——.—T. I.

The Stoneyshire sessions' ball, of which (thanks to the graphic pen of the reporter of the *Stoneyshire Sentinel*) the reader now possesses a full description, is, I may remark, always held upon a Monday evening, or, in other words, on the evening of the first day of Stoneyshire sessions. Hillboro' (at which town Stoneyshire sessions are held) is on the Monday of the sessions' week filled with travellers. There are first the county magistrates, who, accompanied by their wives and daughters, drive in early in the morning—as the ladies have usually some shopping to do in Hillboro' in anticipation of the ball in the evening. There are next the county attorneys and their clerks; the county policemen who bring with them droves of unwilling men and women who happen to be witnesses in the cases which are to be tried that day at sessions; then there are the grand and petty jurymen (twice as many of whom as are ever wanted are always summoned, and who, in dreadful fear of being too late, arrive at the courts an hour too soon); finally, there are the twelve or fourteen members of the English Bar, who attend Stoneyshire sessions, and who all put up at the 'White Hart,' where the sessions' mess is held.

At ten o'clock on the Monday morning of the sessions' week, the county magistrates, to the num-

ber of fifteen or twenty, are assembled at Hillboro' Court House, and the Chairman of Quarter Sessions for the County of Stoneyshire (Mr. Denham, Q.C., M.P.) at once proceeds to charge the Grand Jury. The chairmanship of the Quarter Sessions is an entirely unpaid office, yet as it is considered to confer honour on its holder it is one which is a good deal coveted by the J.P.'s for the County of Stoneyshire, who alone are eligible to fill it. These gentlemen had, however, two or three years ago, the good sense to elect Mr. Denham to the post of Chairman. Mr. Denham is a gentleman who practised for a good many years at the Bar, but on succeeding to some property in Stoneyshire he retired (with the rank of a Queen's Counsel) from the exercise of his profession.

It may safely be said that Mr. Denham is one of the very few competent chairmen of Quarter Sessions whom England possesses. In his early career at the Bar he had a considerable practice at Stoneyshire sessions both in prosecuting and defending prisoners, and as the result thereof he has the criminal law of England at his finger's ends. No one can be in court for ten minutes without seeing how valuable Mr. Denham's early training at the Bar is to him in his present post. Observe with what quickness and perspicuity he

charges the Grand Jury—not wasting time as most chairmen of country sessions do in uttering platitudes about ‘the evil effects of intoxication in leading persons to commit crimes,’ &c., but pointedly directing the attention of the Grand Jury to such of the cases as really present some features of difficulty. Having lucidly explained to them the law bearing upon the few cases in which these points of nicety arise, Mr. Denham dismisses the Grand Jury to their labours.

Nine out of every ten men, I should say, who are engaged in practice at the Common Law Bar, began their professional career by addressing a country jury at Quarter Sessions. Here, for example, to-day is young Mr. Phunky (who was only called to the Bar last term) making his first attempt to address a British jury. Poor fellow! As he rises the court seems to spin round before his bewildered eyes, and his own voice sounds to him as though it belonged to some one else. The intense silence in court, the ‘stoney British stare’ of the twelve jurymen whom he is confronting; even the sympathetic glances which he can see some of the county magistrates are casting at him from the bench alike unnerve him. Before he has spoken two minutes he finds himself helplessly involved in a sentence which seems to him never to

have had any beginning, and which he finds himself utterly unable to bring to a close. At length he fairly breaks down, for he stops short in the middle of a sentence and, looking as though he would like to rush from the court, drops into his seat.

But Mr. Denham, Q.C. is a kind-hearted and withal an experienced man, and he at once reassures Mr. Phunky, by remarking to him in a casual way—and quite as though the fact of a barrister breaking down in the middle of a speech was a matter of everyday occurrence—‘You had better call the witnesses for the prosecution, Mr. Phunky.’ Mr. Phunky, who a moment ago considered that his prospects in life were ruined and that an immediate recourse to prussic acid was the only thing left for him to do, takes Mr. Denham’s hint, and without attempting to resume his address to the jury, at once calls the first witness for the prosecution. He—fortunately for Mr. Phunky—is a clear-headed, sensible man, and, as it is by no means so embarrassing to young beginners at the Bar to examine witnesses as to make speeches, Mr. Phunky manages to elicit from the witness the main facts of the case for the prosecution. This gives Mr. Phunky confidence, though he *does* once or twice put, as all young counsel do, some terribly

'leading' questions to the witnesses which make Mr. Denham wince, but which, out of kindness for Mr. Phunky and from a belief that no substantial injustice is being done to the prisoner, he allows to be asked. So encouraged is Mr. Phunky by his success in examining his witnesses that (the prisoner whom he is prosecuting being defended by counsel) he manages to sum up the case for the prosecution to the jury in a few modest, clear, and even well-turned sentences. The fact is, that Mr. Phunky has 'found his head' (as the saying is), and being, though a nervous, by no means a stupid man, I have little doubt that in a few years' time we shall find him one of the leaders at Stoney-shire sessions, 'defending' in half-a-dozen cases in a day, and wondering how upon earth he could ever have made such an ass of himself in his first prosecution !

That men possessed even of great talent, either through nervousness or ignorance, do occasionally make fearful exhibitions of themselves when they address a court of law for the first time I may illustrate by an anecdote which is told of a gentleman who now occupies a high post in Her Majesty's government. The post filled by this gentleman is, in point of fact, so high, that were I to attempt to indicate it more minutely the reader would have no

difficulty in singling out the hero of my story. As, however, I do not wish to give any clue to the identity of the gentleman in question, I shall here call him Mr. X. Mr. X., then, had a brief given to him (his first one) to prosecute a prisoner at —shire Quarter Sessions. This prisoner, it so happened, had been convicted six times previously, which fact was duly stated in Mr. X.'s brief, but was never intended to be mentioned by him to the jury. Indeed it is a cardinal rule in English law that during the trial of a prisoner a jury must never be informed of his having been previously convicted of any crime for fear of their minds being thereby prejudiced against him. Mr. X., however, after stating to the jury the facts of the case against the prisoner whom he was engaged in prosecuting, went on, to the horror of every one in court, to say, 'Finally, gentlemen of the jury, I shall call a witness before you who will prove to you that the prisoner has been convicted six times of offences similar in character to that for which he now stands arraigned!'

The scene in court after Mr. X. had concluded his speech with the foregoing astounding remark was, I am assured by an eye-witness of it, ludicrous. The chairman of Quarter Sessions sat aghast; the magistrates grinned; the Bar shrieked with laughter; and even the very policemen knew

that Mr. X. had made a fearful blunder. When silence was at length restored, Mr. X. was, as a matter of course, severely rated by the chairman, in the name of the magistrates, for his sins, and so keenly did he feel the reprimand that he never again came to —shire Quarter Sessions. In summing up the case in which Mr. X. had prosecuted, the chairman, of course, entreated the jury to dismiss from their minds what they had been most improperly told by Mr. X. as to the prisoner's previous evil career, and they were elaborately exhorted to try the case upon its own merits. It is, however, almost needless for me to say that the jury could not fail to remember what Mr. X. had told them, and without more ado they found the prisoner guilty.

I have often noticed that there is a great difference between a country jury and a town jury in the readiness which they display in finding prisoners guilty. A country jury seems always to lean to mercy's side, and, if they can see any possibility of acquitting a prisoner they always do so. With a town jury the case is very different. Whether it is that living in a town tends to make people more acute or more cynical than those who live in the country I shall not attempt to decide, but certain it is that twelve town jurors will disbelieve a tale

told by a prisoner which would find ready credence with country jurors. In like manner, too, a feeling of pity towards the prisoners always seems to fill the bosoms of the country witnesses, but which is noticeably absent from the breasts of the town witnesses. These last, indeed, oftentimes give their evidence in quite a vindictive way. No class of men can, however, approach the police in the rancour with which they give evidence against prisoners. So notorious, indeed, are the police in the matter of 'hard swearing,' that I have heard a judge say privately that he would never, if he could help it, allow a prisoner to be found guilty upon the unsupported testimony of—no matter how many!—policemen.

It is sad in looking over the calendar of prisoners to be tried at Stoneyshire Quarter Sessions, or indeed at any quarter sessions throughout England, to notice how frequently the letter 'N' (signifying that the prisoners to whose names it is appended can neither read nor write) occurs. I have scores of times seen calendars of the Stoneyshire Quarter Sessions containing the names of as many as sixty prisoners, not one of whom had received, what is termed in the calendar, a 'superior' education. By this term all that is meant is that the person thus referred to could read and write fluently, knew arith-

metic, and was not entirely ignorant of geography and history. It is, I fear, but too true that the majority of the prisoners who appear at Stoneyshire Quarter Sessions have never had a chance in their lives of being anything else but professional thieves. Born, as most of them are, of parents who live by crime ; surrounded in their earliest years by an atmosphere of vice, and suffered by the State to grow up utterly untaught, who can wonder that children reared under such conditions as these become—as their fathers and mothers were before them—professional thieves ?

The business at Stoneyshire Sessions is generally so heavy that two courts have to sit simultaneously in order to finish it in two days. In the second court there usually presides the Rev. Charles Collingson. Mr. Collingson is rector of one of the villages near Hillboro'. What he may be in his own pulpit I venture not to say, but I am justified in remarking that he is emphatically *not* the right man in the right place when he is presiding at Stoneyshire Quarter Sessions. He is not a lawyer ; he is indeed so ignorant of the commonest rules of the law of evidence that he perpetually allows all sorts of improper questions to be put to witnesses ; he is deaf ; he is timid ; he is slow ; but he is painstaking and honestly desirous of doing justice

between accuser and accused. He frequently, however, sums up a case to the jury in so confused a way that by experienced counsel a prisoner is considered to have twice as good a chance of obtaining an acquittal if he is tried in the second court before Mr. Collingson instead of in the first court before Mr. Denham!

By noon of the second day the criminal business at Stoneyshire Sessions is usually brought to a close, and the hearing of appeals is begun. These appeals generally come from beer-house keepers who have been refused licences by some of the county magistrates; from ratepayers of certain districts who object to a particular road in the county being closed; and from various other people who consider themselves aggrieved in some way by recent decisions of the county magistrates of Stoneyshire. Usually the hearing of these appeals is brought to a close by seven o'clock in the evening, and the county magistrates then adjourn to have dinner together at the 'White Hart.'

As a rule, most of the barristers who 'go' Stoneyshire Sessions leave Hillboro' on the afternoon of the second day and proceed on twenty miles to Greenpool. Greenpool is the largest town in Stoneyshire, and its sessions are always held on the day following the county sessions at Hillboro'.

The borough sessions at Greenpool are, of course, presided over by the Recorder of Greenpool (H. Quirk, Esq., Q.C. M.P.). Mr. Quirk is the leader of the circuit in which the county of Stoneyshire is included. He has a large practice in London, and he has only with difficulty managed to tear himself away from it in time to get down to Greenpool by the mail train last night. He has had, too, to be up early this morning in order to read through the depositions taken before the magistrates in the cases which are to be tried before him at Greenpool sessions to-day. He knows, moreover, that he has a long brief to read through on his way back to town to-night in a heavy case which he is 'in,' and which will come on in London the first thing to-morrow. Mr. Quirk is accordingly by no means in the best of humours this morning, for he sees clearly that he will have to work to-day both hard and fast if he is to get the sessions business done in time to allow of his catching the up train to London to-night. He therefore charges the Grand Jury of the town of Greenpool in the fewest possible words, and in dismissing them sharply requests them to return into court the very instant they have found a bill against a prisoner. He then addresses the counsel at the Bar, requesting *them* if the cases in which they are retained

for the prosecution are simple not to open them to the jury in a speech, but simply to call the witnesses for the prosecution. He next addresses the clerk of the court, commanding him 'to get twelve common jurymen into the box,' so as to be ready to commence the trial of the first prisoner against whom a bill shall be presented by the Grand Jury; nibs his pen, and then proceeds to talk affably with the Mayor of Greenpool, who is seated near him on the bench. Presently a bill is brought in by the Grand Jury; the prisoner referred to in it is at once arraigned at the Bar; the witnesses are examined for the prosecution; Quirk sums the case up to the jury; they find the accused man guilty; Quirk sentences him to seven years' penal servitude; and all this is accomplished within the space of thirty minutes from the conclusion of Quirk's charge to the Grand Jury!

In this way will Quirk proceed, without a moment's interruption, throughout the entire day. I confess that I pity those twelve jurymen who are now in the jury box. They are decent tradesmen, accustomed to sit down to a comfortable dinner at one o'clock, whereas Quirk never takes any lunch and never dines till eight o'clock at night. Quirk will, therefore, remorselessly keep the wretched jurymen whom he has at present got

hold of hard at work during the entire day, pitilessly disregarding their humble request, preferred at one o'clock, to be allowed 'to go h'out for h'only five minutes to 'ave a snack at somethink!' About seven o'clock, having by that time got through the entire calendar, Quirk will dismiss the twelve wretched jurymen more dead than alive, sardonically presenting them at parting 'with the thanks of the country for their valuable services.' Quirk will then rush off to his hotel, enjoy there his eight o'clock dinner and his bottle of hock—the only things Quirk knows are law and hock—and he will then rush back to town by the night train, cramming up *en route* that big brief from which he has to open the plaintiff's case at Guildhall at ten o'clock to-morrow morning.

Greenpool sessions are what are termed in the slang of the Bar 'soup sessions.' In other words, all the prosecution briefs are in the hands of the town clerk of Greenpool, and he gives to each barrister who attends Greenpool sessions (according to seniority) one prosecution brief. Very often there are more barristers present than there are cases to be tried; in which event 'the soup,' in the slang of the Bar, is said 'not to have gone all round.' Upon the other hand there are sometimes --though rarely--more cases to be tried at Green-

pool sessions than there are barristers present, in which event several of the senior counsel get two briefs. The fee ordinarily marked upon a prosecution brief at sessions is only one guinea, though, I believe, that at some sessions in England, in cases where there are more than six witnesses to be examined, a fee of two guineas is allowed to the prosecuting counsel. In obedience to Bar etiquette, no man who has attained the rank of a Q.C. ever goes sessions unless he be specially retained to do so.

Nearly every sessions in England has a sessions mess, of which every barrister who goes sessions must be a member. Only those barristers too who are members of the circuit in which the county of Stoneysire is included are allowed, by the etiquette of their profession, to go to Stoneysire sessions. The same rule applies to every county in England. Unless, for example, a barrister be a member of the Western circuit he would not be allowed by his professional brethren to practise at Exeter sessions. Similarly no man who is not a member of the Midland circuit would be permitted to practise at Birmingham sessions.

I may close this article by saying that scarcely any barristers who live in London can ever hope, even if they are more than ordinarily successful, to make any money by attending country sessions.

The practice, however, which young counsel acquire at sessions in conducting cases in court is of the utmost value to them, and sometimes enables them afterwards to attain to eminence in the profession. Whenever a young barrister there has obtained a large practice at Country sessions he may fairly be considered to have successfully mounted the first rung of the ladder which may eventually lead him to the judicial bench.

AN EMINENT LEADER.

SIR LONGROBE BIGWIG, Q.C., M.P., stands six feet three in his stockings ; his chest is broad ; his nose is aquiline ; his eyes are keen ; his mouth is firm ; and his voice is one of the most musical with which ever man was blessed. Taken altogether, Sir Longrobe Bigwig is a man of imposing appearance, and he is, without doubt, a very eminent leader. He has in his time had so much practice in addressing juries, that he now knows to a nicety what to say to them, and also—which is often much more important—what to leave unsaid. Sir Longrobe Bigwig, though he now ‘leads’ on one side or the other, in almost every important case which is tried in Westminster Hall, had, so long as he remained a junior counsel, a very small practice at the bar. Nor is this to be wondered at, for though Sir Longrobe Bigwig is an acute cross-examiner, and an able speaker, he has never been celebrated for his knowledge of the laws of his country. Now

what is chiefly needed in a junior counsel is a knowledge of law, whereas the grand requisites in a 'leader' are coolness, judgment, and skill in speech-making. All these last three qualities are possessed in a remarkable degree by Sir Longrobe Bigwig, and hence his rapid success at the bar—after he had once doffed the stuff gown of a 'junior,' and had assumed the silk gown of a Queen's Counsel—is easily to be explained. Many men, however, who 'took silk' at the same time as Sir Longrobe Bigwig, have not been so fortunate. Most of these men had good practices as junior counsel, but they have never been able—nor indeed were they ever fitted—to succeed as leaders.

To show you, my reader, how different the duties of a 'leader' in a case are from those of a 'junior,' let us watch for a little while a trial at *nisi prius*, in which Sir Longrobe Bigwig 'leads' for the plaintiff. He has 'with him' (as lawyers say) Mr. Page as his junior. So soon as the twelve special jurymen have been marshalled into the box, and the associate of the court has called out 'Jones *v.* Brown,' Mr. Page rises, his eyes fixed upon his brief, and in an all but inaudible voice, says, 'Gentlemen of the Jury, the plaintiffs in this case are John Jones and William Jones, and the defendants are James Brown and Charles Brown. The

declaration states that the plaintiffs were possessed of a certain ship, and the defendants were possessed of a certain steam tug, and the defendants agreed to tow the plaintiff's said ship from Wastford to Daleham ; but in the course of such towage they conducted themselves so negligently, that the plaintiff's ship was driven against a bridge and sunk. To this the defendants have pleaded two pleas, the first of which traverses the agreement to tow, and the second is a denial of the negligence, and upon these pleas issue has been joined.'

Having thus, as it is technically termed, 'opened the pleadings,' Mr. Page subsides into his seat, leaving the jury in much bewilderment as to what is meant by a 'declaration,' a 'plea,' and a 'traverse.' No sooner has Mr. Page sat down than Sir Longrobe Bigwig rises, like a tower, and proceeds to state the plaintiff's case to the jury. This he does briefly, for it is one of his maxims to open a case to a jury very cautiously, and, as he himself says, 'to keep his strength in' for the reply. That this is sound policy no one can doubt. Were Sir Longrobe Bigwig in his opening speech, to state in detail what his witnesses were going to say, it is quite possible that some of them might fail—to use the slang of the bar—'to swear up to his opening,' when they got into the witness box. This

would of course prove damaging to the plaintiff's case, as it would be certain to be adversely commented on by the counsel for the defendants. Sir Longrobe Bigwig therefore confines himself in his opening address to the jury to giving them merely such a general outline of the plaintiff's case as will enable them to understand the evidence of the witnesses who are to be called before them. This task, which is a more difficult one than may perhaps be at first supposed, Sir Longrobe Bigwig does with wonderful ease. Indeed, no small part of his reputation as an eminent leader has been gained by the skill which he invariably displays in explaining cases, however intricate, to a jury.

So soon as Sir Longrobe Bigwig has finished his opening speech, his junior, Mr. Page, examines the first witness for the plaintiff, Sir Longrobe Bigwig takes the second, Mr. Page the third, Sir Longrobe Bigwig the fourth, and so on alternately, until all the witnesses for the plaintiff have been examined. Besides examining every alternate witness for the plaintiff, Sir Longrobe Bigwig re-examines each of the plaintiff's witnesses after they have been cross-examined by the defendant's counsel. The task of setting a witness on his legs again (in re-examination) after he has been severely mauled in cross-examination by the opposing counsel, is one which

needs, it will be readily perceived, the exercise of both skill and patience.

After the defendant's counsel have opened their case, the task of cross-examining each of the witnesses whom they call falls upon Sir Longrobe Bigwig. Now I may affirm without fear of contradiction that let a man's natural talents for advocacy be what they may, nothing but long and constant practice in court will enable him to cross-examine with effect. In truth, I might almost say that the first requisite for making a good cross-examiner is experience, and the second is experience, and the third is experience. It is, also, necessary, in order that a man may become a really able cross-examiner, that he shall possess quickness of observation ; a power of almost instinctively seeing whether a witness is speaking the whole truth, or is keeping something back ; and dexterity in framing questions. Sir Longrobe Bigwig possesses in a remarkable degree all the faculties which I have just named, and it is greatly owing to his exercise of them, that he has risen to be such an eminent leader.

The popular notion of cross-examination is that it simply consists in bullying the witnesses, and there are undoubtedly men at the English bar who are bullies, and nothing more. But these men, my

reader, are only poor practitioners of the great art of cross-examination, and whenever they find themselves opposed to witnesses of education and ability they are completely foiled. If you watch Sir Longrobe Bigwig as he cross-examines the defendants' witnesses in the present case, you will see that so far from bullying them he addresses them with a studied blandness of manner. Bigwig's art indeed consists in eliciting, by his suave manner and by his skill in framing his questions, admissions from the witnesses which they never intended to make.

After Sir Longrobe Bigwig has finished his cross-examination of the defendants' witnesses,—from whom he has managed to quietly elicit several important facts,—the defendants' counsel sums his case up to the jury ; and it then becomes the duty of Sir Longrobe Bigwig to reply upon the part of the plaintiff upon the whole case. Now if there be one thing in which (say the admirers of Sir Longrobe Bigwig) his skill as an advocate is more conspicuously displayed than in any other, it is when he is speaking 'in reply.' Some men (Sir Longrobe Bigwig's friends admit) surpass him as a cross-examiner ; others again can state a case to a jury quite as lucidly as he can ; but 'in reply,' Sir Longrobe Bigwig (his friends maintain) has no

equal. Now that all the witnesses for the plaintiff have been examined, and now, too, that the case for the defendants has been fully revealed, Sir Longrobe Bigwig feels himself perfect master of the 'situation.' In his reply he either delicately glosses over or, as he sometimes does, quietly ignores the weak points in his own case, whilst he mercilessly exposes all the shortcomings in that of the defendants. He exhibits too, in full relief, the strong points in his client's case, and in his reply he mainly devotes himself to the 'driving home' of two or three of these into the minds of the jury.

This he does advisedly, for Sir Longrobe Bigwig's long experience of British juries has taught him that the twelve honest Britons whom he is now addressing will not come to a decision in the case by weighing niceties of evidence whether on the one side or the other, but by reflecting upon two or three salient points in the plaintiff's or in the defendant's cases. It is therefore, as I have just said, to the 'driving home' of two or three of the strong points in favour of his client, that Sir Longrobe Bigwig, in the course of his reply, mainly devotes himself. These two or three strong points he will repeat more than once to the jury, for his experience in addressing juries has taught him that

an average Briton *needs* to have a thing repeated to him at least twice before he fully comprehends it. If, however, Sir Longrobe Bigwig were addressing a jury of Frenchmen, you would find that he would not repeat things twice to them, for his instinct would teach him that it was not necessary for him to do so. In the very speech to which we have just been listening, I confess that I thought Sir Longrobe Bigwig repeated himself to somewhat unnecessary extent ; but the explanation of his doing so he laughingly gave to his junior, Mr. Page, when he sat down upon the conclusion of his speech. Turning round to Mr. Page, I heard Sir Longrobe Bigwig say to him, ' I dare say, Page, you thought just now that I was repeating myself a good deal, but the fact was I saw that that fat old juryman in the left-hand corner of the box there, hadn't followed me in what I had said about that important point as to the width of the river between the piers at Daleham Bridge ; and so I waited till I could catch his eye, and then I went all over it again for *him*. He saw the point then, and he's now for us, Page, or I'm very much mistaken !'

Sir Longrobe Bigwig is *not* mistaken, for not only is the particular juryman in question in favour of the plaintiff, but also the majority of his brethren. Without even leaving the box they at

once return a verdict for the plaintiff, and by so doing add another to the long list of Sir Longrobe Bigwig's forensic triumphs.

From what has now been written, the reader will, I hope, have perceived how different are the duties of the leading counsel in a case from those of the junior counsel. What we have seen Mr. Page do to-day in court has merely been to examine three of the plaintiff's witnesses. All the really difficult work of re-examination, cross-examination, and speechmaking has been performed by Sir Longrobe Bigwig. Yet Mr. Page's duties as junior counsel in the case, though they have not been so publicly performed as have those of Sir Longrobe Bigwig, have been neither few nor slight. I have, however, described the duties of a junior counsel, in a previous article, so that I shall not say anything more about them here.

Sir Longrobe Bigwig, ere the verdict was given in the last case, in which we heard him address the jury, has to rush off to another court, there to argue 'in banc' in a case in which he is retained. Now Sir Longrobe Bigwig, though, as we have just seen, he can manage a case admirably before a jury, is not strong 'in banc.' He is, indeed, by no means a match 'in banc' for little Mr. Hardhead, against whom he now finds himself pitted. Mr. Hardhead's

appearance is very different from that of Sir Longrobe Bigwig. He is small in stature, weak in health, and his voice is shrill and high-pitched. Yet is his mind sharp as a needle ; and in arguing cases 'in banc,'—*i. e.* cases involving purely legal points, and which are decided by the judges alone,—Mr. Hard-head is as immeasurably superior to Sir Longrobe Bigwig as Sir Longrobe Bigwig is to him in addressing juries.

To begin with, Sir Longrobe Bigwig's imposing appearance and pleasant voice—which help him amazingly when he is addressing a jury—do not in the slightest degree assist him in arguing before the four crusty old judges whom he is now addressing. Moreover, as I intimated at the beginning of this article, Sir Longrobe Bigwig has never been by any means strong in his law. He had not, as I have mentioned already, any great practice as a 'junior,' and whatever law he now knows he has picked up since he attained the rank of a Q.C., and began to 'lead' in cases. It is true that Mr. Brown, Sir Longrobe Bigwig's junior in the present case, did what he could, when in consultation with him this morning, to 'coach' his eminent leader in the law of the case which Sir Longrobe Bigwig is now engaged in arguing. The fact, however, is that during the whole of the consultation this morning,

Sir Longrobe Bigwig's mind was running upon a speech which he intends to deliver to-night in the great debate upon the Cuban question, which is now proceeding in the House of Commons. In point of fact, Sir Longrobe Bigwig has been specially asked by the great Lord Precedent to speak to-night upon this Cuban question. Seeing that Sir Longrobe Bigwig held the post of Solicitor-General in Lord Precedent's late administration, and that if his lordship can only manage to return to power, he is certain to appoint Sir Longrobe Bigwig to the post of Attorney-General, it is clear that that eminent leader had no option but to comply with the wishes of his political chief. During the whole of last night therefore, Sir Longrobe Bigwig was engaged in preparing his speech upon the Cuban question, and,—his mind being naturally still full of it this morning,—he did not pay so much attention as he ought to have done to his junior's remarks made to him in consultation.

By reason of this inattention upon his part, you perceive that Sir Longrobe Bigwig is floundering about terribly in his argument 'in banc' this afternoon. At length he stops short, and suddenly wheeling round to his 'junior' Mr. Brown, says to him, 'Brown, *you* know far more about this case than I do. Will you, like a good fellow, go into it

pretty fully, and I'll cut *my* argument down?' Of course Mr. Brown acquiesces, for he sees clearly that if he doesn't come to the rescue their client's case will go to the wall altogether. He therefore intimates to Sir Longrobe Bigwig that he will argue the case fully in his speech, whereupon that eminent leader (much relieved) very speedily brings *his* argument to a close, remarking with great suavity, as he does so, 'M' luds, I shall be followed by m' learned friend Mr. Brown, who is with me in this case, and he will, I have pleasure in assuring your ludships, do full justice to any arguments which I may have failed to bring before you.'

The judges who have for some time past observed Sir Longrobe Bigwig's increasing difficulties, cannot help grinning to each other at the cool way in which he has now got out of them. Sir Longrobe Bigwig himself straightway rushes off to the library of the House of Commons, there to conclude the preparation of the speech, with which at five o'clock this afternoon he is to resume the debate in the House of Commons upon the Cuban question. After he has delivered this speech—it is certain to be a success, for Sir Longrobe Bigwig is an excellent debater, and one of the very few lawyers who have ever succeeded in winning the ear of the House of Commons—he will return to the library

of the House, and will there read up his briefs for to-morrow until about 2 A.M. ; at which hour he will be summoned to take part in the division upon the Cuban question. If the ministry be defeated, then will Lord Precedent and his party return to power, and ere many days are over, Sir Longrobe Bigwig will find himself appointed Her Majesty's Attorney-General. From that post he will, in due course, be promoted to the Chiefship of one of the superior Courts of Common Law.

It was said of the late Lord Brougham by his enemies that he knew a little of everything—except law. I have heard the same remark applied to Sir Longrobe Bigwig. Perhaps there is some truth in it. Sir Longrobe Bigwig is a good classic (he was a fellow of his college in Oxbridge) ; he is an excellent linguist ; a capital judge of pictures ; he has read much, and travelled much ; he knows good wine ; he gives pleasant dinner parties ; finally, *mirabile dictu*, he never talks legal 'shop.' Upon the whole, perhaps the highest compliment which I can bestow upon him is to say this—that if you were to meet him in general society, you would never dream that he was 'an eminent leader.'

LINCOLN'S INN.

MOST readers will remember the graphic description of Lincoln's Inn and its surroundings which was given to the world by Mr. Dickens in the opening chapters of 'Bleak House.' Although twenty years have now elapsed since the publication of that work of fiction, the external appearance of Lincoln's Inn remains unchanged. The courts in which the Lord Chancellor, the Lords Justices of Appeals, and the three Vice-Chancellors sit, resemble externally—more than anything else which I can remember—the sheds which one sees erected at steamboat wharves for the temporary reception of the goods which are landed there. Internally the courts at Lincoln's Inn present the appearance of a third-rate Dissenting Chapel in a fourth-rate provincial town. The advantage, however, in this last comparison lies, I am well aware, with the Dissenting Chapel, for the chances are that the ecclesiastical edifice in question would be clean and comfortable, whereas the buildings which are occu-

pied by Her Majesty's High Court of Chancery, are filthy and uncomfortable to a degree which it is impossible for me to describe in words. The atmosphere in them, moreover, is invariably humid with the moisture arising from the mass of sweltering humanity which daily throngs them. Their acoustic properties are so bad that if you are twenty feet from the counsel who is speaking you cannot hear a word he is saying, whilst as for the judge's remarks, they are generally (as the reporters so frequently state in the newspapers) 'nearly inaudible in court.' It is, however, possible that some part of the general 'inaudibility' which prevails in the courts at Lincoln's Inn may be accounted for by the fact that both Chancery judges and Chancery barristers are, as a rule, wretchedly bad speakers. In argumentative power and skill there are, without doubt, many men at the Chancery Bar who are fully equal, if indeed they are not superior to, their Common Law Brethren of Westminster Hall. But, as a general rule, nearly every Chancery barrister mumbles when he is addressing a judge in Lincoln's Inn, whereas at Westminster Hall the leading counsel utter their words *ore rotundo*.

The chief cause of the difference which exists between the style of speaking which prevails in

Westminster Hall and that which is in vogue at Lincoln's Inn, is, it seems to me, to be found in the fact that the barristers who practise at Westminster Hall are in the constant habit of addressing juries, whereas most of the counsel who practise at the Chancery Bar have never found themselves face to face with a jury in their lives. In the Chancery Courts the counsel simply state the facts of the cases to the judge, and then proceed to argue them by reference to previously decided cases. The constant practice which Chancery barristers thus have in addressing judges (and not juries) naturally tends to produce in them a quiet, gentlemanly, and withal argumentative style of speaking, though, as I have already said, it also leads to their adopting a low, monotonous, and mumbling tone of voice. Perhaps, however, another cause of the low tone of voice generally adopted by Chancery barristers is that they are not as a rule—though of course there are exceptions—men of powerful *physique*. At the Chancery Bar a man with a weak body and a piping voice may (providing that he has brains and friends) rise to eminence, whereas I do not remember a single instance of a man who has attained to a large practice in addressing juries who has not possessed a good pair of lungs encased in a powerful body.

In the cases which are heard before the equity judges at Lincoln's Inn all the counsel who are retained in them successively address the court 'from the greatest even unto the least,' or, in other words, from the oldest Q.C. to the youngest stripling who has received a brief (by special favour) in the cause. The youngest counsel of all—who speaks, of course, last—invariably commences his speech by remarking that he 'follows on the same side as his learned friends who have just addressed the court.' He then proceeds to remark that after the 'exhaustive speeches,' to which the judge has just listened, he 'does not propose to occupy more than a very few minutes of his Honour's time.' After which—if he be a young man who is likely to rise in his profession—he will address the court for upwards of an hour, and he will, during that period of time, serve up a *réchauffé* of the arguments which have already been used by his learned leaders rather than hazard any new (and probably doubtful) ones of his own. By pursuing this wise and prudent course he will assuredly find favour in the eyes of the solicitors who have given him a brief in the case, and who will remark one unto another, when he at length concludes his speech, that 'Mr. Young-fellow is a very promising young counsel, and one

who is likely in time to make a very "safe" and valuable junior in a case.'

No great injury moreover—save a slight waste of the public time—has been sustained by reason of Mr. Youngfellow's addressing the court for an hour. His leaders, you may rest assured, have not listened to a word he has said, for they have been all the time deep in the voluminous briefs which have been delivered to them in other cases. As for the judge, be sure that *he* has not heard one word which Mr. Youngfellow has uttered. His Honour's power of abstracting his mind from surrounding circumstances is indeed so great that the instant he saw Mr. Youngfellow rise to his feet he immediately withdrew his attention from his court at Lincoln's Inn, and reflected within himself whether he should yield to his wife's wishes, and allow her to give a ball; whether if Captain De Boots did really propose to his eldest daughter Mary, he should give the young folks his blessing or insist instead upon her making a better match; whether he ought not to ask his old friend Baldwin (though he *was* now a little out of elbows) to dinner, &c., &c. His Honour will then write five letters, which he feels he ought to have written days ago, and after doing so he will proceed to deliver a judgment in the case—Mr. Youngfellow having by

this time finished his speech—the lucidity of which will be only equalled by the knowledge of the facts of the case which it displays. His Honour had, in point of fact, quite made up his mind as to the judgment which he *ought* to deliver before Mr. Youngfellow rose to address the court, but he feels upon the whole rather obliged to that young gentleman for having afforded him a spare hour wherein to do so many odd jobs which needed to be attended to!

Chancery barristers as a rule regard their work as being more ‘genteel’ than that of their brethren at the Common Law Bar, and I confess that I think that there are grounds for this belief of theirs. Undoubtedly, juniors at the Chancery Bar have not to do nearly so much of what I may call ‘rough and tumble work’ on first starting in their professional career as have juniors at the Common Law Bar. Another advantage which Chancery barristers have over their brethren of Westminster Hall is that they are spared both the expense and the trouble of going circuit. As the judges of the Court of Chancery never leave Lincoln’s Inn, Chancery barristers can remain in their chambers in London from the second day of November till the seventh day of August—upon which latter blissful day the legal long vacation com-

mences—whereas Common Law barristers have to leave London to attend circuit and sessions six or seven times in the course of each legal year.

There is yet another point in which young Chancery barristers have a 'pull' over junior counsel at the Common Law Bar. It is in relation to that peculiar institution of the English Bar which goes in the profession by the name of 'devilling.' 'Jones is "devilling" that brief for Smith' is a phrase which, though it is common enough amongst barristers, must be *caviare* to the outside world. The explanation of it is, however, simple enough. Mr. Smith is a barrister in large practice, who has not yet solved the problem of how to be in two places at once. He therefore hands over his brief in a cause which has just been called on before the Master of the Rolls to his friend Jones, whilst he himself proceeds to argue in a more important case, which is being simultaneously heard before the Lords Justices of Appeals. Now, Mr. Jones, in return for 'devilling' his friend Smith's brief (in other words, for doing Smith's work for him), would, in accordance with the custom at the Chancery Bar, receive half of Mr. Smith's fee, but supposing Mr. Jones to be at the Common Law Bar, he would, in accordance with the practice in vogue there, receive nothing whatever for rendering

his friend Mr. Smith the same service. It is, of course, true that in arguing Mr. Smith's case the opportunity is afforded to Mr. Jones of distinguishing himself—sometimes unhappily also of *extinguishing* himself—and in this way by 'devilling' briefs many men have got a first start at the Bar.

Apropos of 'devilling' I may remark that the gentleman who at the Common Law Bar fills the post of Junior Counsel to the Treasury is always styled amongst barristers the 'Attorney-General's Devil,' because he 'devils,' or, in other words, assists the Attorney-General in his work whenever that high functionary is too busy to attend to all his duties. This post of 'Attorney-General's devil' is much coveted amongst 'juniors' at the Common Law Bar, because its holder—who is always a 'stuff-gownsmen'—is almost invariably raised to the judicial bench. The analogous post at the Chancery Bar—so far at least as regards the certainty of promotion to be attained by its holder—is that of Vice-Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster. This last-named office is frequently conferred upon one of the most eminent juniors at the Chancery Bar, who is nearly always afterwards promoted to a seat upon the judicial bench in one of the Courts of Chancery.

I may conclude this paper by remarking that

Lincoln's Inn possesses many interesting historical associations. The garden wall of Lincoln's Inn, on the side near Chancery Lane, is said to have been the scene of 'rare Ben Jonson's' performances as a bricklayer. In the garden of Lincoln's Inn, Bickerstaff, in the 'Tatler,'¹ describes himself as being permitted to walk 'by favour of the Benchers who had grown old with him.' Sir Thomas More, Oliver Cromwell, Sir Matthew Hale, the Earl of Shaftesbury, and Lord Mansfield were all members of Lincoln's Inn. Finally, let me recall here the fact—which I will venture to assert not one Londoner in a hundred knows—that just outside of Lincoln's Inn, in the square now known as Lincoln's Inn Fields, that great man and pure patriot Lord William Russell died upon the scaffold.

¹ No. 100.

AT THE OLD BAILEY.

THE exteriors of few buildings in London are better known than those of Newgate and the Old Bailey. Country cousins are always shown the frowning walls which appertain to them, and gaze thereon with awe. Some visitors to London indeed determine—as did my friend Rusticus to-day—to penetrate into the interior of the Old Bailey, and to see for themselves the ‘dock’ in which so many famous criminals have stood. No sooner did I, in obedience to his earnest entreaty, conduct my friend Rusticus into the interior of the Old Bailey than I observed a smile of recognition to steal across his face. ‘My dear friend,’ he exclaimed, as he grasped my hand, ‘I could have recognised the interior of this court anywhere from the really admirable view of it which appeared in the “Illustrated London News” at the time of Palmer’s trial. Dear me! How unchanged it is!’

Yes, there it is. The capacious dock nearly twenty feet square ; the bulging three-partitioned gallery above it ; the impassive clock face, exactly below which Palmer stood, and towards which, during the long hours of his trial, he oftentimes cast weary glances. There, too, confronting the prisoner's dock are still the judges' seats, immediately above which, and emblematic, I suppose, of the sword of justice, there hangs a lethal weapon of portentous size ; to the left of the dock there sit to-day twelve men in the very seats occupied by the weary jury during the ten long days in which Palmer's fate hung in the balance ; close below the dock are still the seats for counsel ; and to-day, as in 1856, near the judges sit the sheriffs and aldermen of the city of London in their furred robes of office. But though the scene is still the same as at the time of Palmer's trial, nearly all the actors in that *cause célèbre* have passed away. Notably the seats which were occupied by the great advocates who appeared in it on one side or the other are to-day filled by men who, outside of the walls of the Old Bailey, are entirely unknown to fame. In the front seats reserved for counsel there sit to-day, you observe, Rusticus, three gentlemen, Mr. Bullywell, Mr. Scowler, and Mr. Screwham. These three worthies, let me tell you, Rusticus, are re-

nowned. (though you have never heard their names) amongst certain low attornies as being what those worthies call 'h'eminent h'advocates.' Of the three, Mr. Bullywell is the most famous. He has a peculiar method of 'doing his defences' which—for you are, you know, Rusticus, a J.P. in your own county—it may be worth your while to-day to study. Let us therefore seat ourselves in that quiet corner near the seat of the Clerk of Arraignment, and pay attention for an hour or two to an Old Bailey trial.

But first you ask me, Rusticus, why that elderly man in the front row of the barristers' seats has a black patch on the top of his wig, whilst the wigs of the other counsel near him are destitute of that adornment? The reason is because the gentleman in question is a serjeant-at-law. The black patch to which you pointed is called the coif, and it is said to be a relic of the monkish tonsure, for in olden days, as you know, Rusticus, the professions of the Church and the law were one. In ancient times the serjeants-at-law were men of great note, and even now before a man can be created a judge of one of the superior Courts of Common Law he must be first appointed a serjeant-at-law. All the judges of Westminster Hall are therefore members of Serjeants' Inn, and it is from this circumstance that

whenever a judge addresses a serjeant in court he always calls him 'brother.' An amusing case, Rusticus, is recorded in the law reports in which a new trial was moved for upon the ground that one of the jury had, after the first trial was ended, admitted that he had given his verdict for the defendant solely because he had noticed that the judge who tried the case always addressed the plaintiff's counsel as 'brother;' and he (the jurymen) thought it most unfair that a judge should try a case in which his own brother appeared as counsel!

During late years the rank of serjeant-at-law has decayed in importance, and now every rising barrister aspires to be created a Q.C. in preference to being 'raised to the coif.' The reason, Rusticus, why so many serjeants-at-law and so few Queen's Counsel practise at the Old Bailey is because every Q.C. is supposed to be always retained for the Crown, and therefore before he can take a brief against the Crown to defend a prisoner (the Queen, as you know, Rusticus, is in all criminal cases the nominal prosecutrix) he must obtain leave from the Crown to do so. This leave is, unless there be very special reasons for refusing it, always granted. A serjeant-at-law can, however, take briefs for or against the Crown without asking leave to do so, and for this

reason barristers whose practices lie in the criminal courts usually prefer to be made serjeants-at-law rather than to be advanced to the higher but (to them) less lucrative dignity of a Queen's Counsel.

But see, Rusticus, the grand jury are returning into court with a true bill against Jane Smith for larceny. 'Put up Jane Smith,' cries the Clerk of Arraignment, and in a few moments Jane Smith (an innocent enough looking girl of seventeen or eighteen years of age) appears in the prisoner's dock. 'Jane Smith,' says the Clerk of Arraignment, addressing the prisoner, 'there is an indictment against you, for that you on the seventh day of December last, in the year of our Lord, one thousand eight hundred and seventy-one, did feloniously steal, take, and carry away one purse, the goods and chattels of one Giles Chawbacon, against the peace of our Lady the Queen, Her Crown, and dignity. There is a second count in the indictment charging you with receiving the said purse, well knowing it to have been stolen. How say you, Jane Smith, are you guilty or not guilty?'

'Not guilty,' responds the prisoner, in a faint voice half-choked by a very effective sob. In her hand, Jane Smith, you observe, Rusticus, holds something wrapped up in paper, and at the sight thereof you remark that a positive thrill runs

through the bewigged figures before us. Do you ask me why? Know then Rusticus that, although according to bar etiquette, a barrister can ordinarily take a fee from a client only through the medium of a solicitor, yet a relaxation of this rule is permitted in criminal cases. It often happens that although prisoners are destitute of funds wherewith to fee solicitors to prepare briefs for their defence, yet they are able to scrape together a solitary guinea wherewith to retain a counsel to defend them. In cases where this happens, a barrister is allowed by the etiquette of his profession to accept a fee 'to defend,' direct from the prisoner in the dock. Defence cases of this kind are therefore technically known as 'dockers.' After this explanation you will, I hope, Rusticus, be able to understand the cause of that thrill of expectation which you noticed a moment ago to run through most of the counsel in court. In her hand, wrapped up in paper, Jane Smith holds a guinea, and she is anxious to secure the services of a barrister to defend her on the charge of pocket-picking, of which she now stands arraigned.

Attracted possibly by the imposing appearance of Mr. Bullywell, she requests one of the policemen to hand her guinea to him. Mr. Bullywell, who has apparently been in a state of profound abstrac-

tion ever since Jane Smith appeared in the dock, gives, you observe, quite a dramatic start of surprise upon discovering that *his* services are desired by the prisoner ; whilst upon the other hand you notice that the countenances of Mr. Bullywell's learned friends Mr. Scowler and Mr. Screwham, assume an expression of the deepest gloom. So annoyed in fact is Scowler at losing Jane Smith's guinea, that he vents his rage by declaring in a loud whisper to Screwham (his comrade in misfortune) that 'it's no wonder Bullywell has just got that "docker," for he "squares" every turnkey in Newgate,'—and thereby induces the turnkeys to recommend the prisoners to get *him* to defend them !

No sooner, you see Rusticus, does Mr. Bullywell receive the prisoner's fee, than he rises and loudly informs 'his ludship' of the fact that he has just been retained to defend Jane Smith—a circumstance which, seeing that it will probably protract the trial at least two hours, cannot fail to be peculiarly gratifying to his lordship.

● Proclamation is next made to the prisoner that 'the twelve jurymen, whose names' the clerk of arraigns will now read over, 'are the jurymen by whom you, Jane Smith will be tried, and if you, the said Jane Smith, have any objection to them or any of them, you must make it when they come

to the book to be sworn, and before they are sworn, and you will be heard.' No objection being made to any of the jurymen, the twelve good men and true who are to try Jane Smith, are speedily marshalled into the jury-box. The clerk of arraigns then proceeds to (as it is technically termed) 'give the prisoner in charge' to the jury by reading the indictment over to them, adding at the end the words 'to this indictment the prisoner has pleaded not guilty. You will hear the evidence, gentlemen, and decide.'

Thereupon rises Mr. Howler, the counsel for the prosecution, and proceeds to state, with a great deal of unnecessary detail—for Howler loves to hear himself talk—the case against the prisoner. The prosecutor in the case, it appears from Mr. Howler's opening speech, is Mr. Giles Chawbacon, a farmer residing in Hertfordshire. Mr. Chawbacon had come up to town to attend the cattle show, and having seen it, he had afterwards—'like a gallant gay Lothario from the country, gentlemen,' interpolates Howler with a hideous leer at the jury—gone to the Acropolis Music Hall. When the performances there were over he was making his way out of the building when he fancied he felt a hand in his pocket, and the next moment he discovered that his purse was gone. Turning round

he seized hold of the prisoner (whose hand he fancied that he had felt in his pocket), and charged her with having stolen it. The purse was not, however, found upon the prisoner when she was searched at the police station. Mr. Bullywell (in the interests of the prisoner) here nods emphatically to the jury to direct their attention to this last, of course, highly favourable circumstance for his client. Mr. Howler happening to observe Mr. Bullywell's nod, an interesting passage-at-arms at once takes place between the two learned counsel. 'I will thank my learned friend,' remarks Mr. Howler in a loud and angry tone, 'not to make any signs to the jury whilst I am addressing them.' Old Bullywell, who is a knowing bird, looks slyly at the jury, and, without rising from his seat, replies, 'I can quite understand—and so, no doubt, can *you*, gentlemen—the *reason* of my learned friend's annoyance.' Hereupon one or two of the jury grin approvingly at old Bullywell, who, upon his part, responds by affectionately leering back at them.

'Yes, gentlemen, I was saying,' resumes Mr. Howler, 'when I was so rudely interrupted by my learned friend'—it is curious by the way to notice, Rusticus, how the members of the Old Bailey Bar who are notoriously the most ignorant men in their profession are always scrupulously particular

in addressing each other as 'learned'—'I was saying gentlemen,' continues Howler, 'that the stolen purse was not found upon the prisoner. And why wasn't it found upon her, gentlemen? Why, because she had handed it to a confederate!'

Now observe here, Rusticus, an admirable illustration of disreputable Old Bailey practice. Mr. Howler knows well that there is no statement in his brief to the effect that the purse had been handed by the prisoner to a confederate, yet, notwithstanding this, he does not, as you have just heard, hesitate to state to the jury as a fact, what is in reality only a suggestion of his own. As the prisoner is, however, defended by Mr. Bullywell, this improper conduct of Mr. Howler's has the effect of bringing that learned gentleman instantaneously upon his legs. 'I should be glad to be informed by my learned friend,' says old Bullywell, 'what authority he has for the statement which he has just thought fit to address to the jury. There is not one tittle of evidence,' he continues, in a stentorian voice, 'not one single tittle of evidence, gentlemen, in the depositions taken before the magistrates of the fact which my learned friend has just stated to you.'

The judge who is presiding is weak, and instead of peremptorily bidding both counsel to sit down,

and then making Howler confess that he had stated as a matter of fact what really was only a suggestion of his own, he allows an angry altercation to go on between Bullywell and Howler. At length the unfortunate Howler resumes his speech, and manages to bring it, without further interruption, to a close. He then calls the prosecutor, Mr. Chawbacon, who, as it is technically termed, 'swears up to' the opening statement of Mr. Howler. Mr. Chawbacon is then cross-examined by Mr. Bullywell in true Old Bailey style as to the exact hour at which he had arrived in London from the country on the morning of his visit to the cattle show ; how he had employed himself during every moment of that unhappy day ; how many people he had spoken to ; what he had had for dinner ; how many public houses he had entered throughout the day, &c. &c. The examination is then proceeded with as follows :—

Bullywell : 'Now, sir, I will take you to the Acropolis on the night of the robbery. What did you have to drink there ?'

Witness : 'I don't remember.'

Bullywell : 'But you must remember, sir.'

Witness : 'I really can't, sir.'

Bullywell : 'We'll see about *that*, sir !' [digs his hands deep into his trousers pockets, eyes the jury

fixedly for a moment, and then roars out] 'What do you *usually* drink, sir?'

Witness: 'Beer.'

Bullywell: 'And how much beer had you had at the Acropolis on the night of the robbery, sir?'

Witness: 'Perhaps two or three glasses.'

Bullywell: 'And how much gin had you, sir?'

Witness: 'None, sir. I never drink gin.'

Bullywell [solemnly]: 'Be careful, sir. Did you not say when you were before the magistrates that you had had a glass of gin at the Acropolis?'

Witness: 'If I did, I don't remember having said it.'

Bullywell [with increased solemnity]: 'Is not that your signature at the bottom of that page?' [hands witness the depositions taken before the magistrates.]

Witness: 'Yes, it is.'

Bullywell: 'Well, sir, don't you say there, "I had had one glass of gin at the Acropolis?"'

Witness: 'Yes; I see it's stated there, so I suppose I must have said it.'

Judge: 'Are you going to put the depositions in, Mr. Bullywell?'

Bullywell [reproachfully]: 'No, m' lud.'

I may here explain to you, Rusticus, that the effect of Mr. Bullywell's putting in as evidence on

his behalf the depositions in the case, would be to give the prosecution the right of reply, and so to deprive Mr. Bullywell of the inestimable benefit of having the last word at the jury ; hence his reproachful answer to this unkind enquiry of the judge. Several of the jurymen are, it is clear by this time, much impressed by Mr. Bullywell's cross-examination upon the subject of the inebriety of Mr. Chawbacon, which fact Mr. Bullywell astutely perceiving, he continues at great length to cross-examine the unfortunate prosecutor as to whether he hadn't had more than *one* glass of gin at the Acropolis ; whether he would swear he hadn't had *six* ; whether upon his solemn oath he would venture to deny that he hadn't had *five* ; whether he (the prosecutor) wished to induce those twelve intelligent men whom Mr. Bullywell saw in that box before him to believe that he hadn't had *four* glasses of gin, and so on. At the close of this part of Mr. Bullywell's cross-examination two or three of the jury have fully made up their minds that the prosecutor was drunk, and quite incapable, on the night of the robbery, of knowing what he was doing. Howler, seeing this, endeavours in re-examination to set Mr. Chawbacon on his legs again by saying to him jocularly, 'Well, Mr. Chawbacon, though you *had* had something to

drink at the Acropolis, yet I suppose you knew quite well how to take care of yourself?' The only effect, however, of this well-meant effort of Mr. Howler's to reassure the witness is—inasmuch as Mr. Chawbacon is by this time knocked half stupid by Mr. Bullywell's cross-examination—to induce him to reply feebly, 'Well, I don't quite know about *that*, sir!'

Then Howler, after calling one or two unimportant witnesses, sums the case up for the prosecution in a furiously vindictive speech—the excessive ferocity of which I can only explain to you, Rusticus, by telling you that all counsel who like Mr. Howler are generally engaged in defending prisoners whenever they *do* happen to prosecute in a case invariably press it in the most ferocious manner against the prisoner instead of temperately laying it before the jury as they ought to do.

When Howler has finished his speech, he is of course followed by Bullywell, who feeling that he has a winning case, and that three at least of the jury are with him, (to whom he especially addresses his remarks, and whose eyes he tries to catch) launches forth into terrific denunciations of the way in which the case for the prosecution has been conducted by his learned friend. After courteously likening Mr. Howler to 'a panther

thirsting for the blood of the prisoner' he settles down to demolishing the moral character of the unfortunate prosecutor. He paints the unhappy Mr. Chawbacon (who is in reality a perfectly harmless and respectable member of society) as a drunken libertine. He comments at great length upon Mr. Chawbacon's inability to state with accuracy what he had had to drink upon the night of the robbery, 'from which fact, gentlemen,' says Mr. Bullywell (with a wink at one of the jurymen whom he sees is in his favour), '*you*, as men of the world, will draw your own conclusions.' He enlarges upon the fact of the stolen purse not having been found upon the prisoner, and although he knows well that Jane Smith has been convicted several times previously, he paints her in true Old Bailey style as an angel of light. He remarks severely upon what, 'with pain, gentlemen, yes, with pain,' he must take leave to designate as 'the unworthy, the scandalous, and he will even add the unexampled conduct' of his learned friend, Mr. Howler, in asserting that the prisoner had passed the purse to a confederate, when there was 'not one tittle of evidence, gentlemen—not one single tittle of evidence'—to support his learned friend's statement.

'Dismiss that suggestion, gentlemen,' continues

Mr. Bullywell—who, as he warms to his work, slaps the palms of his outstretched hands together, and lets his ugly mouth fall with an Old Bailey ‘droop’ at the end of each sentence—‘dismiss that suggestion from your minds, gentlemen, and try this case upon the evidence, and what do you find? You find a drunken man coming out of a place of amusement at the hour of midnight—at the hour of midnight, gentlemen; he is surrounded by a crowd of men and women who are pressing upon him upon every side; he feels some one’s hand in his pocket, or he *fancies* he feels some one’s hand in his pocket; for I think, gentlemen, you’ll agree with me that Mr. Giles Chawbacon was in such a state of intoxication that he could’nt distinguish between fact and fancy; he seizes hold of the person nearest him who happens to be—such is life, gentlemen—my unfortunate client. But, gentlemen, where is the prosecutor’s purse? Was it found upon the prisoner? No! Where is that purse, gentlemen? In the sacred interests of justice, I demand that purse. But, gentlemen,’ (sinking his voice to a whisper) ‘d’ye believe that the prosecutor’s purse was ever stolen at all? D’ye not think that the prosecutor may have lost it himself, or even given it away—for remember, gentlemen, how drunk he was? Gentlemen, excepting

for the unsupported testimony—the unsupported testimony, gentlemen—of the prosecutor, there is no evidence that any robbery was ever committed, and even if there were a robbery, there is nothing to show that the prisoner was the person who committed that robbery. Gentlemen, remember, that if you have any doubt of the guilt of the prisoner’—

Judge (interrupting)—‘Reasonable doubt, Mr. Bullywell.’

Mr. Bullywell: ‘I am obliged to his ludship, gentlemen, for the correction; and, as I was saying, if you have any reasonable doubt in this case, you are bound to give the prisoner the benefit of that doubt. Gentlemen,’ adds Mr. Bullywell, trying hard to infuse a little tenderness into his harsh and strident voice, ‘gentlemen, she is a woman; she is young; she stands, it may be, for the first time, in that dock.’ (No one knows better, Rusticus, than Mr. Bullywell that he has himself defended her upon two or three previous occasions, when she has been charged with the committal of similar offences to that for which she is now being tried). ‘Gentlemen,’ continues old Bullywell, ‘she feels acutely the position in which she stands.’ (At this point the young woman with admirable skill, buries her face in her hands and sobs convulsively.) ‘I ask you, gentlemen,’ concludes Mr. Bullywell, (after gazing with

genuine admiration at the prisoner and remarking *sotto voce* to a barrister sitting near him, that 'she is a knowing one,') 'I ask you, gentlemen, to give the prisoner the benefit of the doubt, which I venture to think you *must* feel in this case, and acquit her of this charge.'

Mr. Bullywell with this sits down with a theatrical crash and—it must be admitted, Rusticus, that he has worked hard for his guinea! The judge now sums the case up to the jury very weakly, and the twelve intelligent men whom Mr. Bullywell saw in that box before him, speedily make him happy with a verdict of Not Guilty.

Let us now go, Rusticus, for a few moments into the other court, for there are generally, you must know, two courts sitting at the Old Bailey for the trial of prisoners. That bullet-headed man, Rusticus, whom you see upon the judgment seat in the second court, is Mr. Baron Bounderby, one of the Barons of Her Majesty's Court of Exchequer, and the counsel who is addressing him is Mr. Sergeant Sleekman. Sleekman's *forte* as an advocate, let me tell you, Rusticus, is 'earnestness.' You can hear, for example, at this very instant, that he is addressing the court upon behalf of injured innocence in an 'earnest' voice. Mr. Sergeant Sleekman, Rusticus, can weep at will. See, even now

he is passing his cambric handkerchief before his eyes to wipe away the tears that are bedewing his manly cheek. It is, of course, of Sleekman, Rusticus, that the celebrated Old Bailey story is told, of his once holding up a weeping child to the jury, whilst he besought them to have sympathy upon the mother of the hapless babe whom he held in his arms.

‘Why do you cry so, my boy?’ thereupon demanded the counsel for the prosecution of the weeping infant.

‘Because, sir,’ replied the *enfant terrible*, ‘he’ (meaning Sleekman) ‘is pinching me so!’

But Sleekman’s ‘earnest’ address, Rusticus, has come to an end, and Mr. Baron Bounderby is beginning to sum up. Bounderby, Rusticus, is a very able judge, and watch how, in a few telling sentences, he demolishes the flimsy case for the prisoner, which Sleekman has striven so hard to set up. The jury, at the close of Bounderby’s summing up, at once find the prisoner guilty, and the learned Baron you hear, instantly proceeds to pass sentence.

‘Prisoner at the bar,’ remarks the learned Baron, ‘the jury have found you guilty, upon evidence which could leave no doubt upon the mind of any sane man, that you committed an outrage marked by the grossest brutality, by the most’—

'Ow much?' here roars out the ruffian in the dock, who (being apparently of the negro's opinion that, 'if you floggee, floggee, and if you preachee, preachee, but no preachee and floggee both') is not disposed to listen to any more of the learned Baron's remarks.

'Ten years! take him away!' responds the unmoved Bounderby (making no attempt to resume his lecture), and the ruffian in the dock speedily disappears.

Another case is instantly called on. But what is this? Baron Bounderby, you hear, is sternly rebuking that young counsel, who is on his legs, for putting what the learned Baron describes as 'a most improper question' to the witness who is under examination. Ah! Rusticus, the learned gentleman who is being so sternly rebuked by Baron Bounderby, is but an inexpert practitioner of the famous Old Bailey rule, 'No case, so abuse the other side.' He has, I gather from the learned Baron's remarks, dared to ask the witness under examination—without his having, be it understood any instructions in his brief to authorise him to put such an insulting question—whether he (the witness) had not been at some remote period of his life convicted of some offence? That style of question, I may tell you, Rusticus, is often put *on pure*

speculation by certain disreputable Old Bailey barristers.

‘What an abominable shame!’ Rusticus responded, and so speaking, he began angrily to elbow out of the Old Bailey.

When we had passed into the street, I observed that the countenance of my honest friend was flushed with anger.

‘What’s the matter with you, Rusticus?’ I enquired.

‘What’s the matter!’ angrily rejoined Rusticus, ‘I’ll soon tell you what’s the matter, only I suppose I shall vex you if I do?’

‘Pray say whatever you wish,’ I politely replied.

‘Well then,’ answered Rusticus, ‘since you *are* so monstrous civil, I *will* tell you what I wished to say to you. And it is this: I think your learned friends of the Old Bailey Bar,—

‘In the first place, Rusticus,’ I interrupted, ‘let me tell you that the gentlemen in question are *not* my friends, and in the second place—’

‘Yes they *are* your friends,’ Rusticus rudely broke in, ‘you are a member of the same noble profession as they are’ (Rusticus quite sneered as he pronounced the word noble, which plainly showed me how unreasonably angry he was) ‘and so they *are* your learned friends, and you would call them

so in court, you know you would ! And what to tell you is, ——'

'Don't speak so loudly, Rusticus !' I inter-
'I'm not deaf, and you are shouting so that e-
body in the street is looking at you.'

'What do I care if they *are* looking at
Rusticus roared out. 'What I want to tell
he went on in a stentorian voice, 'is that, I
your learned friends of the Old Bailey Ba-
—upon the whole—rather greater ruffians than
prisoners in the dock whom they defend !'

'My dear Rusticus,' I replied, as I wrung
honest hands, 'I scarcely know which to a-
most—the lucidity of your judgment, or the
with which you have expressed it. Come,
take a cab to the Temple.'

Papers.

'OUR LEADING COLUMNS.'

EVERY MAN, we are told, imagines himself competent to drive a gig, stir a fire, and write a leading article. Of the two former accomplishments I cannot say much. As I have never pretended to possess them myself, I shall not attempt to impart them to others ; but the third is an accomplishment which is so mysterious in the eyes of the uninitiated, and at the same time appears to the presumptuous to be of such easy acquirement, that 'a leader-writer' can hardly fail to interest somebody if he attempts a faithful exposition of the sublime mysteries of his craft.

The 'leader,' as it now appears in the full glories of long primer in our morning and evening journals, is, it need hardly be said, an essentially modern creation. The man who takes up a volume of the 'Times' or the 'Morning Chronicle' for one of the

early years of the present century, will be sadly disappointed if he expects to find in either anything resembling the articles which are now provided for him every day. A few bald lines of summary, and a stilted and ungrammatical sentence feebly echoing the gossip of the town, are all that he will find in the columns which are now filled with essays often of remarkable literary ability, and almost always written with force, clearness, and elegance. But it has been by long years of slow and weary progress that the editorial 'we' has attained its present position; and even now there are but few persons—beyond the limited number behind the scenes—who have any adequate idea of the combination of industry and talent which has daily to be put in force in order to produce the leading columns of a London morning newspaper.

The great blunder of the newspaper reader is in supposing that there is such a being as an actual owner of the 'we,' who is alone allowed to use it, and who is the author of all the articles in which it makes its appearance in any particular newspaper. The truth is, that the 'we' is a literal fact, and not, as most people suppose, a mere figment invented for the purpose of giving dignity and emphasis to an individual expression of opinion. With hardly an exception, the leading articles of

the London press, and especially those dealing with the more important political topics of the day, are more or less the work not of one single person, but of several gentlemen, combined for the purpose, almost all of whom have had some hand in the dish which is finally set before the public. These gentlemen are the leader-writers of the press, and the position they hold is a very curious and anomalous one. They are not editors—an editor may be a leader-writer also, though even that is not always the case ; but the ordinary leader-writer has no pretensions to the superior dignity. And whilst they rank beneath the editor-in-chief, they place an immeasurable gulf between themselves and his lieutenant the sub-editor, who perhaps comes nearer to the popular notion of what a newspaper editor is than any other member of the staff.

The 'sub' is regarded by the leader-writer as a mere paste-and-scissors man, and is accordingly treated by him with an amount of contempt, to which, I am bound to say, he is very seldom entitled. The leader-writer has nothing to do with the internal management of the office in which he is engaged ; except on rare occasions, he knows scarcely anything of the news which the sub-editor is gathering in from all quarters of the globe for the next morning's issue ; and he has only a limited voice

in directing the policy of the journal to which he is attached—a policy to which he is not unfrequently personally opposed. What, then, are his special functions ?

I cannot better answer the question than by describing the manner in which, every day in the week, the leaders of at least one morning journal are produced. Scene the first opens in the ‘consultation room’ in the newspaper office in the city. The time is an hour after noon, and the persons of the drama are some half-dozen gentlemen, of various ages. There is a poet, whose works have never sold ; a novelist, who is happy in being able to command the respect of publishers ; the son of a peer, who was once in a cavalry regiment ; a barrister, who finds leaders bring him more guineas than he gets from his briefs ; a literary Bohemian, who has travelled over half the world, and who has seen everything, from the inside of Whitecross Street Prison to the Kremlin at Moscow ; and a leader-writer pure and simple, whose name has never been heard outside one or two quiet clubs off the Strand, but who is every day helping to mould the opinions of the public, and whose influence on those opinions it is difficult to over-estimate. Gathered together around a table, the little company so formed is presided over by the

nominal editor of the journal. He may be a man who writes constantly himself, but it is just as likely that he never writes at all.

The first business to be gone through consists of a choice of subjects for the articles for the next day ; and this, perhaps, is the most difficult part of the whole matter. Only those who have been forced to go on writing day after day for months and years together, and who every morning have had to find some new topic on which to discourse, can have any notion of the difficulty which the necessity of making such a choice presents. When parliament is up, and the dull season in full swing, leader-writers are driven almost to distraction in their search for 'something new.' How they scan the columns of despised 'local prints,' and how eagerly they dart upon the smallest paragraph, the most trumpery police case, that seems likely to afford a text for a social leader of the humorous or pathetic sort ! On one occasion, a leader-writer of my acquaintance was told to write upon anything he liked, the editor informing him in despair that the only subject he could give him was—Nothing ! He took the hint, and actually wrote a leader upon the difficulty of finding subjects to comment upon in those sleepy August days when all the town was holiday-

making. This was making bricks without straw with a vengeance.

On another occasion, a well-known writer received as his portion a text so infinitely small that he felt everything must depend upon his own ingenuity. He sat down, cudgelled his brains for a couple of hours, and finally produced a smart and lively article, the only fault of which was, that it did not contain the slightest allusion to the subject to which it was supposed to refer, and consequently left the reader in a state of hopeless bewilderment as to the reason for the expenditure of so much wit and learning.

But let us suppose, in the present instance, that Parliament is sitting, and the Reform debates of the year 1866, say, at their height. There is therefore no dearth of subjects, and very quickly the editor's secretary or assistant has his sheet filled with the various topics suggested. These are: Mr. Beales and Mr. Walpole; The London Conference on the Luxemburg Question; Italian Finance; The Trades' Union Commission; The Tailors' Strike; The Last Case of Justices' Justice. But here are six subjects, and at the most but four leaders are wanted, only three of which will in all probability be used. So the weeding-out process has to begin. 'Italian Finance won't suffer by being

kept over for a day ; put it down for to-morrow,' says the editor. 'Tailors' Strike : ah, Thompson wrote on that last week ; it's too soon to be at it again.'

There then remain four questions to be considered, and over these the battle-royal begins. First comes the great cause of Beales (M.A.) *versus* Walpole. Four members of the council think as badly of Beales (M.A.) as of Walpole, and say so in the plainest terms. One is full of sympathy for the Home Secretary, and earnestly pleads his cause against the bullies of the Reform League. Two others, however, are just as enthusiastic on behalf of the ex-revising barrister. The discussion which takes place is at least as warm as that which is subsequently held in 'the House,' and it is enlivened by a capital anecdote from our Bohemian, of which each gentleman present mentally makes a note, for use in future leaders. Finally, the question is settled by the majority of votes, and it is decided that a castigation shall be administered equally to the Reform League and the government in the leader which is to be devoted to the exciting subject. Then the editor hastily sketches in a dozen lines the tone of the article as it has been decided upon by the council, and gives the paper to one of the members of the triumphant majority. About the next question—the Luxem-

burg Conference—there is not much to be said. The editor and one of the leader-writers have almost all the talking to themselves, and the latter gentleman receives orders to take the subject and ‘make what he can of it.’ The Trades’ Union Commission is the subject of quite an angry debate between the two principal political economists of the party, one of whom is madly enamoured of Mr. Ruskin’s ideas, whilst the other pins his faith to Mr. Mill. As—to use the slang of the profession—Ruskin’s theories ‘won’t wash,’ the Trades’ Union leader is given into the hands of Mr. Mill’s disciple, whose face has grown red in the heat of the discussion. There only remains the case of the little boy who has got three months’ hard labour for stealing a turnip, and before the debate upon this subject begins, our Bohemian, who has discreetly held his tongue during the discussion of the two previous topics, tells a story so ludicrous and appropriate, that even the political economists shake their sides with laughter, and the council with one consent devolve upon the story-teller the duty of scarifying Dogberry. The last business is to appoint some one to go down to the House of Commons in the evening to hear the debate, and, if necessary, to write upon it ; and this having been done, the council breaks up.

Then the leader-writers commence their afternoon's labour, whilst those who have escaped writing for that day make their way westward to their clubs or homes. Some of the chosen stay in the office, and write there; others slip along to quiet chambers in Brick Court, and write as Pendennis or Warrington might have done, undisturbed, save by the whistling of some idle lad on the pavement beneath their windows. By five, or, at latest, by six o'clock, their task must be completed. 'The leader then is finished, I suppose?' says my reader. Not so, my friend. The leader, as yet, is but rough-hewn, and has still to be shaped by the divinity which presides over every modern journal. But first of all it has to be set in the bold clear type in which the finished article subsequently appears.

Then, when set, the 'reading' commences. First, it is read for mere errors of the press, all of which are corrected with scrupulous care. Then the 'revise,' as the second proof is called, is given to the chief reader, who must be a man of education and intelligence. He reads it for 'the sense.' Any grammatical blunders—and of such blunders there are not a few—are corrected: sometimes the careless writer has omitted a word in the middle of a sentence, or has left it otherwise imperfect, and all such defects have to be remedied; the classical

and historical allusions are carefully verified, for nothing looks worse than a blunder in one of these ; and if there is any obscurity in any particular passage, it is marked in such a manner as to call the attention of the next reader to the doubtful sentence.

By eight o'clock, all this work has been done, and a final proof of the leader, printed on a great sheet of paper, which leaves a margin seven inches wide on either side of the type, is ready for the hands of the editor. Then he again comes upon the scene, and with him a new character—the revising editor. These two, sitting opposite each other at the desk, set themselves down to three hours' hard work. The leaders are carefully read, compared with each other, and with previous articles on the same subjects, and altered and revised as the judgment of the editor may direct. Very frequently, this revision amounts almost to the re-writing of the article ; and sometimes the original writer scarcely recognises a sentence of his own composition in it as it appears the next morning. Seldom, indeed, does it escape without some alteration, generally made at the very parts which the author of the article is most anxious to preserve intact. To a young writer, nothing is more annoying than this system of

revision ; he revolts against it as the mothers of Egypt revolted against the slaughter of their first-born. But no expressions of disgust or indignation have any effect upon the ruthless editor ; and should the victim complain of the manner in which his productions are treated, he is most probably told that he has been paid for what he wrote, and that he has no longer any interest in or control over an article which has become the property of another. Indeed, it is hard to see how, under our present system of leader-writing, this revision could be avoided. If every writer signed his articles, the case would be different ; but where all the articles in one journal are put forth as emanating from the same source, it is absolutely necessary to secure their consistency by a severe and rigorous system of revision and alteration. Whether the anonymous system is an advantage or not, is a question upon which I do not pretend to enter here. Of the extent of the alterations made by the editor and his colleague in the leader before it is allowed to go forth to the world, some idea may be gained from the fact, that the corrections in the type rendered necessary by these alterations cost the proprietors of one daily newspaper alone a thousand pounds a year !

On some of the morning papers the manner in

which the leaders are produced differs from that which I have described, and a much larger amount of independence is allowed to the individual leader-writers. On one great journal, the daily council about the leaders is not attended by the leader-writers at all. The editor and his assistant draw up between them a list of the subjects to be treated, and the sketch is sent out to the house of the trusted contributor to whom each particular theme has been allotted. The writers for this journal are required to leave notice at all times where they may be found ; and it has happened to some of them, not seldom, to be roused at midnight, or still later, by a manager who has placed in their hands a telegram containing important news just brought to hand, on which a leader has been needed for the next issue of the paper. Some idea of the qualifications required by a leader-writer must be gained from this fact.

How many men are there who could thus sit down at a minute's notice, in the middle of the night, and write an article worthy of the subject and of the great journal to which I allude ? On at least one other morning paper, the council is dispensed with altogether ; the leader-writers communicate personally and separately with the editor, and their articles are seldom interfered with. In

this way the most honest expression of personal opinion, and the greatest amount of originality are obtained ; but it may be doubted whether these advantages make up for the loss which is sustained by not following the practice I have described with respect to the council and its accompaniments.

Where a regular council is held, it will be seen that the leader has to go through almost as many processes as a needle, before it is fit for the eyes of the reader, and that its authorship is divided among many different hands or heads. There are, of course, exceptional cases, in which men who have attained high positions on the press are allowed to write their own thoughts in their own language ; and on the provincial press, where, in general, only one leader-writer is employed, and where the audience appealed to is not so critical as that before which a London newspaper must appear, the writer usually has much greater scope and freedom than his brother of the metropolis. But, so far as the London journals are concerned, a leading article may generally be taken as expressing the views of more than one person.

'OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.'

THE Franco-German war brought the public into closer intimacy with 'Our Special Correspondent' than had ever been the case before. Everybody, of course, has laughed at the eminent 'Jefferson Brick,' the 'own War Correspondent' of the American editor, with whom Mr. Martin Chuzzlewit was brought in contact ; but when we were introduced to that celebrity there were few among us who supposed that he was only the prototype of a very numerous and very important class of newspaper writers. It is true, that during the siege of Rome in 1848, the 'Morning Chronicle' had a correspondent of its own in the capital, and that some very clever letters were written from Spain, during the Carlist struggle ; but, at the time when Mr. Dickens wrote, the regular War Correspondent was still a being to whom the English public had to be introduced.

The Crimean war formed the occasion of the

introduction. England, at that time, had not been engaged in any great European war for forty years, and all of us who are old enough can remember the wonderful thrill of enthusiasm which ran through the country when it was announced that the sword which had so long rested in the scabbard was about to be drawn. Between 1815 and 1854 the English press had made great advances in influence, reputation, wealth, and enterprise ; and as soon as it was decided that our English army should go to the Crimea, more than one newspaper resolved that it would have its own reporter there to chronicle the battles and victories which awaited the Allies.

The 'Times,' of course, took the initiative. It had fixed, I believe, upon a gentleman who was to represent it in the Crimea, when that gentleman fell ill. Now-a-days if, on the eve of a campaign, the representative of the 'Times' or of any great London journal were to be laid aside, there would be at least a hundred applicants for his post. But, in 1854, we had not learned to look upon an expedition with an army exactly in the light of a pleasant holiday tour, nor had newspaper reporters struck out for themselves that new path in which so many of them have since made brilliant reputations. The first who did this was the gentleman to whom the conductors of the 'Times' applied when the

correspondent they had intended to send to the Crimea fell ill. He was a 'newspaper man,' pure and simple, employed at the time in the gallery of the House of Commons ; he had written one or two articles for different magazines ; had described a ship-launch, a review, possibly an execution, or a royal progress for the 'Times,' and his name was William Howard Russell.

In these pages I have scrupulously endeavoured to keep clear of anything in the shape of offensive or impertinent personalities ; but in mentioning the name of Dr. Russell, the writer cannot refrain from paying his own tribute of admiration to one whose whole career is so creditable, not only to himself, but to the newspaper press. Mr. Russell's later life reads like a romance. From being an ordinary 'gallery man,' he has become the companion of emperors and princes, the chosen chronicler of the greatest wars of modern times ; and how well he has deserved his honours, how worthily he has borne them, are matters which, although they cannot be set forth in these pages, are known to all who know anything of Mr. Russell. It was with the Crimean war that he began that life of hard work and adventure which, not only made his own name famous, but which opened out this new field of enterprise for newspaper reporters. Of the

manner in which the 'Times' correspondent discharged his duties, one need hardly speak. He was admitted to be 'the pen of the war;' and we cannot to this day read those graphic passages in his diary in which he described the Charge of the Light Brigade, the Battle of Balaclava, or the Battle of Inkerman without feeling thankful that such deeds have been recorded by such an observer.

Of course, the high and mightinesses, the royal dukes, the field-m Marshals, and generals who went to the Crimea to fight, were anything but gratified at the appearance of 'newspaper fellows' in the camp. Things had come to a pretty pass, had they not, when a parcel of reporters went out with an army, and presumed to write of military movements, and to describe, and even criticise, the progress of a campaign! The reader may be quite sure that even if the climate of the Crimea during that dreadful winter had been as mild as the climate of Algiers, and if a tent before Sebastopol had been as comfortable an abode as the Schwitzerhof at Lucerne, the 'special correspondents' would still have had anything but a happy lot whilst the great siege lasted. As it happens, they had to share to the full the sufferings of the army, whose exploits it was their business to record. Even, now-a-days, when the 'Special' is so far a recognised institution

that he may travel in the train of an Emperor and share meals with a Crown Prince, it is no pleasant or easy task to report a campaign; but in the Crimean days the jealousy entertained towards the representatives of the press by those in authority was intense, and if rumour is to be believed, at least one General of Division avowed his intention of hanging all the reporters the first time he could catch them. That was a friendly general, let it be borne in mind. Soldiers still threaten to hang the newspaper correspondents of the enemy if they can catch them, on the ground that they are spies. But, in 1854, this scant courtesy was about as much as was shown towards them by friends and foes alike.

Well, Mr. Russell and his companions came back from the Crimea in safety, with one sad exception, having told the story of the war in graphic letters to the 'Times' and the 'Morning Herald,' as well as to one or two other English newspapers. What good work they have done in addition hardly needs to be told. It was the letters of the 'Times' correspondent which let the English public know that its brave soldiers were being housed and fed like dogs while they were fighting their country's battles, and but for 'the pen of the war' there would have been a sadder end to that Crimean campaign than most men wot of. The 'pens' came back; and, of course,

they were allowed to return to the more commonplace duties of their profession unrewarded, almost unrecognised. The English nation has not yet sunk so low as to bestow a star or a title upon a mere newspaper writer! Things would be coming to a pretty pass if an English premier were to imitate the example of a mere Emperor of Germany, and decorate a reporter with a medal reserved alone for gentlemen in uniform! Well, there is, perhaps, a good deal to be said in favour of our English custom. At any rate, it cannot be pretended that Dr. Russell has suffered materially because he does not wear the Crimean medal.

The example once set in the Crimea, it became evident that every future war would need to be duly described in the columns of the leading newspapers. Accordingly, when the China war, following hard upon that of Russia, took place, the 'Times' was again represented, its reporter on this occasion being a barrister named Bowlby. Alas! it was his lot to prove that which has since only been too fully and completely demonstrated—that the 'Special Correspondent,' if he has no share in the glories of an army has at least his full share in its perils. Newspaper men, at any rate, have not forgotten the story of how Mr. Bowlby was one of the Englishmen treacherously captured and barba-

rously murdered by the Chinese, in revenge for whose murder the famous loot of the Summer Palace was permitted by Lord Elgin. And let it be recorded here that if the writer who goes forth with his country's armies, to describe their deeds for the benefit of those who 'stay at home at ease,' has no claim upon the state in case of loss sustained in performing his task, he has at least a claim upon his special employers which is cheerfully recognised. The 'Times' made a handsome provision for Mr. Bowlby's widow after his untimely death.

The Indian Mutiny again saw Dr. Russell in the field as Special Correspondent. A sunstroke, a sabre cut across the thigh, more than one hair-breadth escape—these were his rewards for giving the world the exciting chapters in which he told us the story of Lord Clyde's re-conquest of Bengal. The French-Austrian war of 1859 attracted to the plains of Lombardy the representatives of French and German as well as of English newspapers. But it is the plain truth to say that they did not succeed as Dr. Russell and Mr. Nicholas Woods had succeeded. Whether they wanted the pluck, or the discretion, or the descriptive faculty of the English 'Special' need not be told. The fact is certain that the war correspondence of the foreign journals, though frequently very lively, amusing,

and graceful, did not possess anything like the value or the substantial interest of that which appeared in the English newspapers. It is, indeed, only in the American press that there has been an approach to the high degree of excellence which the very peculiar act of 'Special reporting' has attained in this country.

When the civil war began in the United States, the American press—which had for many years been distinguished by a headlong enterprise, the like of which is unknown in connection with any English newspaper—resolved to outstrip its European rivals in the extent to which it developed the war-reporting department. The telegraph was brought into requisition. Numberless 'correspondents' were sent out to every point, and with every army, and the orders given to all were the same: 'Let us have the earliest news, whatever may be the cost.' If the reader turns to a file of American papers, he will accordingly see that during the war, whole pages were occupied by long telegrams from the armies at different points. This, be it remembered, was ten years ago, at which time English newspaper proprietors never dreamed of resorting to the telegraph for anything beyond the transmission of the briefest possible message.

But if the honourable distinction is justly due to the

American press of having been the first to use the telegraph 'regardless of expense' for the purpose of obtaining the very latest news, and if no one can deny the courage and enterprise shown by the American 'Specials' during the war, it is still certain that in literary excellence the American press lagged far behind the English. Dr. Russell went out to the United States as the correspondent of the 'Times' at the beginning of the war. He was received by everybody in the North with open arms. He had come to describe, with the pen of a master, the victories of the Federals. What nobler duty could have been assigned to Homer himself? But it happened that the very first great scene he had to describe was the disgraceful rout of Bull's Run. The New York press may perhaps be pardoned for having softened down the stories of that day of disaster in such a way as to blind its readers to the truth concerning it. Dr. Russell, in one of the most graphic narratives, he ever penned, told the whole truth. Up to that moment he had been one of the most popular men in America. But when the story came back to the United States as it was written in the 'Times,' the rage of the public in the North knew no bounds.

It is ludicrous now to look back and see how, in their sensitiveness, the American people

were guilty of the folly of abusing the 'Times' correspondent for having done his duty, and how they went so far as to dub him 'Bull Run Russell;' as though, by linking his name with that of their own disgrace, they removed something of the shame from themselves. The war taught the Americans many excellent lessons, and among others it taught them the folly of that extreme sensitiveness to foreign opinion which had so long characterised them. Now-a-days they can bear with equanimity—or at least with as much equanimity as most people—the disagreeable truths which we are all so fond of telling about each other. But Dr. Russell's plain speaking was fatal to his success as a war correspondent in free America. He was threatened with assassination; one ruffian, who was on sentry duty at the time, actually presented a loaded rifle at him, and was probably only deterred from firing it through fear of the consequences to himself; in every quarter abuse was showered upon him of the foulest kind; and in the end, after a vigorous attempt to prosecute the work he had gone to perform, he was compelled to return to England. The loss was ours temporarily; but who can doubt that permanently it was that of the Americans? Where is such a history of their war, as that we have of the Crimean war?

The 'Times' had a correspondent in the Southern States all through the struggle—except during a brief interval, when the gentleman in question had succeeded in 'running the blockade,' and came home upon a visit. Everybody remembers how close was the blockade of the Confederate sea-ports. Very rarely was it that a letter could be smuggled through and posted for Europe. Still, occasional letters were sent by the 'Times' correspondent; but even of these many never came to hand in London; and it was calculated, I believe on good authority, that the cost to the 'Times' of each of those which were published was just 140*l.*, that is to say, at the rate of about 70*l.* a column!

It was during the American war that another gentleman, who had long been celebrated as a graceful and brilliant essayist, as well as a marvelously accurate delineator of scenes of English life, became permanently known as a war correspondent. Mr. Sala's letters, describing 'America during the War,' had a graphic vigour, and a picturesqueness which gave them immense popularity among all classes of readers at home. The humour of many of the descriptions will be remembered by all who read these letters, though there were many who objected to the humorous element being obtruded at all in connection with such a very serious thing

as the war in America. Nevertheless, his accounts of the leading actors in the struggle—such as his wonderful word-photograph of Mr. Benjamin Butler—and his sketches of social life in New York and Washington at that great crisis, gave his letters a real permanent value. It will not be out of place to say here that Mr. Sala has been one of the most widely-travelled of all our special correspondents. He has filled volumes with stories of his adventures in Russia, France, Italy, Algiers, the United States and Mexico ; and not very long ago he contributed to an English magazine an article on 'The Special Correspondent ; his Life and Crimes,' which forcibly depicted some of the miseries and misfortunes it is the lot of the man who travels in this capacity to encounter.

When the Seven Weeks War broke out between Prussia and Austria, Dr. Russell again took the field on behalf of the 'Times ;' but it cannot be denied that the honours of the campaign, so far as special reporting was concerned, fell upon this occasion to another representative of the same journal. Stimulated by the admirable pictures of war which Dr. Russell and his fellow-reporters had given to the world, readers now began to demand, in addition, criticisms upon the art of war, not given by some learned professor years after the last shot

in a campaign had been fired, but written from day to day, as the very movements which they criticised were being made. Of course, only a man of special training, and special qualifications, could undertake to provide for this requirement on the part of the public. The 'Times' was, however, fortunate enough to get *the* special man in the case of the war in Bohemia ; and the admirable letters in which Captain Hozier told the story of the campaign, not only gave the English public a knowledge of the movements greater than that enjoyed by the readers of any other nation, but led many who had hitherto looked upon the work of the war-reporters with something like contempt to form another opinion of the value of their arduous labours.

It is only too easy a jump from the war of 1866 to the war of 1870. The only case in which the services of the special correspondents were called into requisition in the meantime was the Abyssinian campaign. But that was in reality nothing more than a pleasant holiday. It afforded neither scope for the energies of the reporters, nor room for the display of their powers as painters of battle-scenes. The case was very different with the Franco-Prussian War. When the world was suddenly agitated in July 1870, by the news that France had declared war against Prussia, and that

a struggle for the Rhine frontier was imminent, nowhere did the tidings cause greater excitement than in the London newspaper offices. Every editor was besieged by eager applicants for the post of special correspondent. Men who had not one of the requisite qualifications, who lacked experience, who knew no language save their own, who had never ridden after hounds in their life, and whose literary efforts had up to that moment been confined to their correspondence with their friends, suddenly jumped to the conclusion that they had only to go out into the field in the track of an army, in order to get the ability to describe the movements of that army in the clear and graphic style which the 'special' must above all things possess. Poor innocents!

One or two of these inexperienced gentlemen did succeed in getting commissioned, and the story of their mishaps would bring tears to the eyes of the most hard-hearted reader. As it was, although there was such a demand for special correspondents as was never known before—for both the American and the English Provincial Press sent representatives to the two armies, most of whom were London journalists—the supply of really good men did not fail. Mistakes were of course made by all the newspapers; but these mistakes only showed how

difficult a thing it is to obtain a man possessed of all the physical, moral, and mental qualities which are essential in a good war-reporter; and upon the whole the English press was supplied with its accounts of the war in a manner which entitles all Englishmen to feel proud at once of the enterprise and the ability of our journals.

The 'specials' took flight from the Charing Cross and Victoria stations, having been duly provided with passports, letters of recommendation, portable ink-stands, india-rubber baths, mackintosh capes, circular notes, field-glasses, and all the other indispensables of a war reporter's outfit. But their troubles were only beginning when they left the dull streets of London behind them. In the first place both Governments announced their determination to be troubled with no newspaper writers. It was a war to the death upon which they were about to enter, and they brusquely told neutrals that they did not care to have them looking on in the character of amateur critics and scenic artists. They were not going to fight for stage effect, and like duellists, who have made up their minds to fight it out, they wished to set to work with closed doors, unwatched and uninterrupted. The strongest pressure had to be brought to bear upon the two powers to induce them to give way. They did give way in the end, as

we all know, but at the beginning of the struggle the unhappy special correspondents had to submit to hardships and indignities which nothing but the strongest devotion to duty on their part could have enabled them to bear. Those who remember the story of the days when the French army was gathering at Metz, will remember that the letters of the newspaper correspondents in those days consisted chiefly of records of their own hair-breadth escapes from the fate commonly reserved for spies. Not one of them but was insulted and arrested, whilst some were shamefully ill-treated and imprisoned, without a shadow of excuse, for a considerable length of time.

Various were the stories told in London concerning those dark days and the actors in them. Of one 'Special' it was said that, being debarred from the exercise of his duties through the unceasing vigilance of the French authorities in preventing his seeing what was going on, he calmly resigned himself to fate, and shutting himself up in a garret in Metz, with no company save that afforded by a huge melon and a bottle of brandy, succeeded in evolving a series of war letters out of his inner consciousness. Another had become the temporary tenant of a room the rightful occupant of which—a fellow-correspondent—

had been haled away to gaol as a spy. The confinement of the latter, whom we shall call Mr. X——, having lasted longer than usual, some of the other English reporters determined to move on his behalf; and they went to enlist the sympathies of Z——, the gentleman who was temporarily occupying X——'s room. 'We've come Z——,' said the spokesman, 'to ask you to help us to get that poor fellow X—— out of prison; he's been shut up for a whole week now.' 'Heavens!' cried Z——. 'Do you imagine I can do such a thing? Why, I found in this room, when I took possession of it, an admirable dressing-case and six excellent shirts, of which I have the free use during Mr. X——'s unhappy detention! Gentlemen, I wish you a very good morning.' The story is by no means authentic, but when it was told it raised a laugh at the expense of the most generous of special correspondents.

Dr. Russell was not sent with the French army. Carrying letters of introduction to the Crown Prince from the Prince of Wales, he followed the Germans in their fortunes during the war. But like all the other correspondents, he was at the outset the victim of untoward circumstances. It was his ill-luck—chiefly, if not entirely, from the difficulties thrown in the way of the special corre-

spondents by the authorities—not to come up with the Crown Prince's army until after it had met and overthrown MacMahon at Wœrth. When he did at last join the Prince he was immediately attached to head-quarters, travelled in the Prince's company, dined frequently at his table, and had quarters assigned to him nightly by the officer whose duty it was to provide for the accommodation of the Staff. Such favour had never before been shown to any newspaper reporter. It may be thought that, under such circumstances, the 'Times' correspondent lived in that luxury and ease which are supposed to be the lot of princes. How different was the reality from all such imaginings! Russell tells us in his diary of the frequent nights he spent with no better bed than a heap of not over-clean straw; of the scanty and almost loathsome food with which he had frequently to be content; of the fatigues, dangers, discomforts of every kind amid which he had to do his work. And yet he was the chief of the special correspondents, better provided for in almost every way than any of his colleagues! Is it possible that there are some people who envy the Special his life of peril and hardship?

Throughout the war it was to the English newspapers that the world trusted for accurate information with respect to its progress. Almost at the

outset one distinguished and well-known man, Colonel Pemberton, who acted as the representative of the 'Times' with the head-quarters of the Crown Prince of Saxony, was shot dead whilst pursuing his duties on the field of Sedan. Another, Mr. Davin, the representative of a Dublin journal, was wounded about the same time at Montmedy, whilst the hair-breadth 'scapes of others would take many pages to recite. Dangers of this kind, and the terrible hardships of a campaign, were not the only drawbacks to the comfort of the 'specials' during this part of the war. What, for instance, could be more annoying to a man, after he had spent many hours in peril of his life upon a battle-field, and many more in writing an account of the scene he had just witnessed, to find that his graphic narrative had been lost in the field post-office, or sent to Turkey, say, instead of England? Something of this sort was constantly happening during the war to the correspondents. It happened to Dr. Russell on the occasion of the first day's fighting near Sedan, and we should have been without the early and admirable account of the great surrender, which appeared in the 'Times,' if Dr. Russell had not travelled express to London from the battle-field, writing the story as he journeyed, and returning to the Prussian army directly he had deposited his manu-

script in Printing House Square. Enterprise of this kind was not shown by one journal only during the war. Mention has already been made of the American press. Accounts of the great battles were telegraphed at considerable length to such papers as the 'Tribune' and 'Herald,' by their agents in London, and it often happened that these gentlemen received important despatches from the battle-field earlier than the London papers. The admirable letters from before Metz which appeared in the 'Daily News,' as well as Dr. Russell's story, first of the march through France, and then of the siege of Paris, will be gratefully remembered by all who read the newspapers—and who did not?—at that time ; whilst the Diary of a Besieged Resident showed that a special correspondent may at times more than atone by the richness of his humour for what I may call the inaccuracy of his information.

It is needless, however, to dwell upon all that was done and suffered by the reporters during this great struggle. Whether shut up in besieged cities, hanging about the trenches of the besiegers, or traversing almost impassable roads in the track of the armies, they were faithful to the cause they had undertaken. They represented the public ; saw everything with eyes which they used for the good of the public, and in the main described

everything with the fidelity which a servant of the public ought to show. One cannot think of these brave and gifted men toiling so cheerfully amid trials, difficulties, and dangers of which few of us have any conception, without a feeling of regret that they should be so little known to those for whose benefit they laboured. Will it be considered an impertinence to mention a few of those who did good service during the struggle? Some of them, the reader will see, have names already well-known in other departments of literature. Mr. Henry Kingsley, Mr. Laurence Oliphant, Colonel Pemberton, Dr. Russell, Sir Randal Roberts, Mr. A. B. Kelly, Mr. Archibald Forbes, Mr. Labouchere, Mr. Robinson, Mr. N. A. Woods, Mr. Sala, 'Azamat Batuk,' Mr. Henty, and Mr. Skinner may be named. But there are others whose services are equally worthy of being recorded. Mr. Blanchard Jerrold tells how, being present in Versailles when the King of Prussia entered it at the head of his staff, he saw one plain Norfolk shirt in the midst of the splendid group of uniforms which surrounded him. Its wearer was Dr. Russell, and his friend owns to having felt a thrill of pride when he saw him there, the representative of something greater, after all, than brute force, and worthier of respect than the most powerful of soldiers. That his services were

not undervalued by the Prussians themselves, was proved after the war, when the Emperor of Germany conferred upon the 'Times' correspondent the Iron Cross of the Second Class.

It is not in wars only that the special correspondent is of use. He goes with a royal party if it travels through Egypt or the United States ; he crosses the Atlantic to witness a boat race ; he tells us all about the laying of the Atlantic Cable, the opening of the Suez Canal, or the entry of the King of Italy into Rome. Our own royal marriages, royal funerals, royal ceremonies of every kind, as well as such things as reviews, great colliery accidents, great races like the Derby, are all described by him. In fact, whilst the ordinary reporter is the ear of the public, the special correspondent is its eye ; and perhaps these pages may lead some to think more than they have hitherto done of the duties he discharges, and of the perils and hardships to which he is exposed.

'OUR OWN REPORTER.'

VERY FEW persons have any idea of the important part played by the reporter in modern social life. He is, as a rule, so unobtrusive, that he seldom comes under the eye of the public ; and during a recent session, when there was a slight scandal caused through the out-spokenness of one knight of the pencil, who had given his opinion respecting a noble marquis in language more emphatic than complimentary, a good many people were reminded, almost for the first time in their lives, of the existence of this large and useful body of men. Yet the reporter is ubiquitous. His mission simply is to be eyes and ears for the world at large. Wherever he goes, he carries his note-book with him ; whatever he does, he keeps his business in mind, and he never forgets that he is the servant of the public—and a very useful and important servant too.

I wish I could give my reader a clear idea of

the actual importance of the place held by the reporter in society. Perhaps the best way of arriving at such an idea is to imagine, if possible, what society would be without him.

In the first place, there would be no record of the debates in parliament, nor any reports of 'extra-parliamentary utterances.' Hungry politicians and excited popular leaders would have nothing to feed upon during times of agitation; would know nothing of what was being said in the Houses of Parliament beyond the vague hearsay reports brought away by listeners in the gallery. Gladstone, and Bright, and Disraeli would all waste their eloquence upon a few hundred or thousand men; their words would perish as they fell from their lips; and, practically, their influence would not be greater than that, say, of the ordinary occupant of a parish pulpit. There would be no interesting 'police news,' opening up a hundred strange phases of life, and putting us upon our guard against a thousand modes of imposition. Great trials would be conducted almost in privacy, for our courts of justice are ingeniously constructed to hold the smallest possible number of spectators, and to allow those present the least possible observation of what is going on. Those large meetings which are sometimes held to forward great movements, and which are often the means of evoking so vast

an amount of public benevolence, would no longer possess a tithe of their present influence. Country Dogberries would be allowed to play any pranks they pleased, in the name of justice, with no fear of outside opinion ; and shareholders in railways or other great commercial companies would no longer have an opportunity of learning the actual position of their affairs, if they were unable to attend the half-yearly meeting, and listen to the chairman's statement.

A hundred lives might be swept away by a colliery explosion, without the public knowing more than the bare fact that such a catastrophe had taken place ; another ' Royal Charter ' might go to pieces on our shores, and months elapse before the friends of the sufferers were made acquainted with their fate ; and great crimes, like the rescue of the Fenian prisoners, might be committed in our very midst without attracting the smallest notice on the part of the public. Mr. Bright never spoke truer words, than when, whilst addressing a meeting at Birmingham, he alluded to the reporters present as ' those gentlemen to whom the cause of liberty and good government was so greatly indebted.'

In no department of newspaper labour has such an advance been made of late years as in reporting. The fathers of the present generation could recall

the feats of 'Memory Woodfall,' who carried away a whole debate in his head without a single note to aid him ; and there are still, both in London and the country, a few reporters extant who rely solely for their note-taking upon an abbreviated long-hand. Let no one, however, suppose that the ability to report in either of these manners will assist him now to a place upon the press. The ordinary reporter's first qualification is a knowledge of some efficient system of shorthand. Unless he is able to take what is called 'a full note' of an ordinarily rapid speaker, he can never hope to reach even a second-rate position in his profession ; and unless he has so complete a command over his fingers and pencil that he can make them follow the most rapid and disagreeable speaker with certainty and without a break, he can never gain any of the prizes which fall to the lot of the best shorthand writers. How difficult it is to obtain such a mastery over 'the stenographic demon,' only those who have tried it know.

Mr. Dickens—himself an experienced reporter—has given us some notion of the miseries which attend the student of shorthand in his 'David Copperfield.' The unhappy wight is oppressed as with a night-mare by the task he has taken in hand. He dreams about it in his sleep, and in

his waking hours it is never absent from his thoughts. At last, after months of labour, when he fondly fancies that he has mastered the crooked cipher, he essays to follow some slow-going speaker. To his horror, he finds that he cannot take down one word in four which is uttered. He must be stout-hearted, indeed, to persevere after such a failure; but if he does so, he will find at each fresh trial that he can get a larger proportion of the speaker's words upon his note-book; until at last he accomplishes the great object of his ambition, and is able to take a *verbatim* report of some very easy orator.

Then comes the second part of his task—the reading of his notes. This is even a more trying ordeal than the other. There are the notes fairly written, and evidently correct; but what on earth do they mean? A word here and there he is able to make out, but not one single sentence in the whole speech can he translate. He is like some poor fellow who, recovered from a fever, finds all knowledge of reading and writing gone from him. Unutterable are the miseries endured by the young reporter at this stage of his career; and even to the last days of their lives, many old shorthand writers find it hard work to read their notes. All this is rather different from the popular notion of

shorthand writing, which is, that it is a sort of magical art, the secret of which is only known to a few happy and favoured individuals.

But let us suppose that the shorthand writer has passed through his apprenticeship successfully, and is fully competent to report any ordinary speaker ; even then his labours have by no means ended ; indeed, they never do end whilst he continues to exercise his craft. Reporting is something more than a mere mechanical art. Mechanical skill, physical strength and endurance, it certainly does require ; but beyond these it needs, if it is to be well done, the constant exercise of a fair intelligence, and occasionally feats of memory which almost rival those of Woodfall himself. The most trying time for the reporter is when he has to take a full note of the remarks of a very rapid speaker. Then his labours are greater almost than he can endure. I have known men of my acquaintance made ill for days after reporting certain abominable public speakers. Two gentlemen of great talent, and no doubt in other respects justly estimable, are, in particular, the horror of all reporters who have once encountered them. Sickness, palpitation of the heart, and utter physical prostration have followed the noting down of their addresses, delivered with a jerky rapidity, which, though not un-

pleasant to listen to, is simply frightful to report. Happily, neither of these eminent men sits in the House of Commons ; but in Sir George Grey, Mr. Lowe, and Mr. W. E. Forster, the parliamentary reporters have to deal with men whose speeches it is scarcely less difficult to record fully and faithfully. The rapidity with which these statesmen speak must be an incurably bad habit ; for they could never willingly inflict upon fellow-creatures the positive pain which many of the reporters who take down their words have to suffer.

Against such speakers as I have named, however, we must put men like Mr. Bright, Mr. Gladstone, and Mr. Disraeli. To a competent shorthand writer, nothing is more delightful than the task of reporting these men. They speak clearly, deliberately, and calmly. Every word that they utter is distinctly pronounced, and nothing is lost by the reporters. In fact, these gentlemen, to use a cant phrase, speak to be reported ; and I have known Mr. Bright, in the heat of a public meeting, when the last word of his sentence has been lost in the ringing cheers of the audience, quietly repeat that word to the reporters sitting beneath him. No wonder that he is a favourite with the 'gallery.'

When a reporter has taken a full note of a speech, he is often asked by some interested observer,

whether he merely hands his book to the printer, and leaves him to translate the shorthand into plain Roman type. Most devoutly does he express in answer to such a question the wish that he did. The fact, however, is that his most tedious work comes after the shorthand writing has ceased. Then he has to repair to his office, and there transcribe the whole of his notes, or such portions of them as may be needed for the paper. He must correct the errors in grammar or fact of the speaker; and if he is a competent reporter, he will give the written speech a finish and elegance of style which in most cases it wants when spoken. The time allowed for this task is four times as great as that taken by the speaker; so that a speech which has occupied one hour in delivery, will take four to transcribe.

I ought to mention that in the case of the government shorthand writers—those employed on Gurney's staff—a different system is pursued. There a certain portion of the staff is trained to write shorthand, and the remainder to read it. During the session, the note-books of the official reporters are collected from the committee rooms three or four times a day, and are given to the writing-out staff, who manage to translate the crabbed hieroglyphics of their colleagues with remarkable

accuracy. Still, many and many a blunder is made both by these readers of shorthand and by the ordinary reporters, which cause those whose words are thus misrepresented to gnash their teeth with agony. 'Partner in the works,' becomes 'pauper in the workhouse.' 'Attenders at clubs in the West End,' mentioned in a speech of Mr. Bright's, appears the next morning as 'vendors of gloves.' 'What do the Italians want?' cried one impassioned orator. 'They want to be a nation.' 'What do the Italians want?' said the reporter next morning, 'They want to be in Asia.' 'Died from recent hæmorrhage,' the verdict returned by a jury on the body of a woman, is transformed into, 'Died from her recent marriage;' evidently the blunder of some misanthropic bachelor reporter. These are a few out of many instances of mis-read notes which have come under my own knowledge. They show that shorthand writers, like other men, are not infallible.

But the mere taking down of speeches forms by no means the only work of the reporter. In London, whilst parliament is sitting, the reporters of the different morning papers have, to be sure, little else to do but record the long debates in 'the House.'

During the recess, however, they have other

and more varied employment ; and provincial reporters have at all times a much greater variety of work than their brethren in the capital. There are the trials of prisoners to be attended ; the police court to be looked after ; flower shows, bazaars, accidents, crimes, races, religious festivals, all to be recorded. It is necessary that the reporter should have some sort of knowledge about all these things, to enable him to write with any amount of satisfaction to himself or his readers. Indeed, like Lord Brougham, he must be a walking encyclopædia, and should, above all things, be 'up' to every kind of slang, from that of the turf to that of the pulpit. In London, the work is given over to different hands. 'Liners' do the police courts, fires, inquests, and accidents ; regular turf reporters do the racing news ; and the descriptive writers of the staff attend to the more important occurrences—such as a review at Brighton or the Derby. There is thus little left but the ordinary routine of shorthand writing for the regular reporter. In the country, however, and especially in the smaller towns, the reporter is Jack-of-all-trades ; and he has, besides, a responsibility on his shoulders from which his happier metropolitan brother is entirely free. He is required to 'take charge' of the town in which he is stationed ; in other words, he is held

responsible if he misses any accident or meeting, or indeed any event of interest which may take place in it. Under these circumstances, he has even an eye to such small items as a petty larceny or a runaway horse, and the keenness of his scent for a murder is absolutely awful.

Capital stories are told of the different varieties of provincial reporters, especially of those of the old school, which is now, happily, passing away. There is the frightfully eager reporter, who is always on duty, never forgetting his mission. One worthy of this class was roused from his slumbers one night by a disturbance on his doorstep. His alarmed spouse compelled him to descend and see what the matter was, and on opening the door, he discovered a man stretched across the threshold in a fit. 'Mary, Mary!' cried he to his better half, 'bring my note-book and a candle directly; here's a paragraph come to the door!'

Such eagerness for work as this shows itself in different forms. An enterprising reporter had heard that Lord Palmerston was to be present at an archery meeting in a small country village in Hampshire, and he accordingly posted down to the place, and, like Mr. Micawber, waited for something to turn up. Lord Palmerston's task was to distribute prizes to some half-dozen blushing young ladies,

and the whole company present didn't number much above a score. His lordship performed his task with his usual grace and good humour, I dare say giving the young ladies a paternal tap on the head, but making only the most commonplace observations. Our stenographer waited anxiously in his place until, to his horror, he saw the proceedings brought to a close without a speech from the Premier. This was more than he could stand. He rushed from his corner to the noble lord, who was getting out of the room as fast as he could. 'My lord—I beg your pardon, but really this *won't* do.' 'What do you mean, sir?' was the reply of the astonished statesman. 'Why, you've made no speech: I've come all the way from London to report it, and I *must* have a speech of some sort.' Whereupon, it is on record—and this story is a true one—that the good-tempered old gentleman turned back, and detained the retreating audience for twenty minutes, whilst he gave them a genial dissertation on the good qualities of English women in general, and of Hampshire lasses in particular.

On another occasion, however, he made up for this complaisance. He was attending an agricultural dinner, and saw a large gathering of reporters, for the times were critical, and a speech of his certain to be valuable. But he had made up his mind not

to speak—no man knew better when to hold his tongue—and accordingly he slyly sent down to the ‘gentlemen of the press’ a slip of paper on which, in his bold round hand, were written the words: ‘This fish won’t bite!’

After the eager reporter comes the flowery one, who has always been particularly great in small provincial towns, and who has at his command a stock of adjectives enough to make Lord Macaulay hide his diminished head. This gentleman is in his glory at a flower show, an execution, a funeral, or, in fact, whenever he has an opportunity of murdering the Queen’s English. One specimen of this school, when writing about a flower show—which is always ‘a horticultural and floral display’—said that it was ‘illuminated by cartloads of sunshine.’ Another—a Liverpool worthy—in giving an account of somebody’s funeral, observed that ‘the body of the deceased gentleman was followed to the grave by a silent and deeply sympathising *audience*.’ I have heard of a paragraph which, with forcible redundancy, was entitled ‘funeral of the remains of a late deceased military officer;’ and I have seen an account of a penny reading wound up with the remark that ‘the entertainment was, upon the whole, the most mirth provoking and soul stirring

which could be had for the money!' The worst thing about the flowery reporter is, that he has done so much to injure the English language. If he can find a fine word to express the same meaning as a plain one, he never hesitates to cast aside the latter; and if he hears of any barbarous invention of our transatlantic cousins, he straightway makes a note of it, and carefully makes use of it at the very first opportunity. His ideas, too, of the meaning of certain words are somewhat hazy. Thus, a fatal accident is constantly spoken of by him as 'a fatality,' and his adjectives are applied in such haphazard fashion that they might almost have been scattered over his 'copy' with a pepper-caster. The quantity of bad French and Latin, too, which he lugs into all he writes, equals that made use of by a fashionable authoress twenty years ago. He has almost naturalised some foreign words amongst us, and has given many a slang term a permanent place in our language. Upon the whole, he is the most objectionable representative of the reporter's craft to be met with nowadays.

The dissipated reporter belongs to quite another school. He was at one time too common both in town and country. Even now, he has not entirely disappeared; but, thanks to the improvement which has taken place amongst press-men generally, he is

no longer looked upon as a type of the entire profession. In the good old days, however, every Eatanswill had a Tom Potts who was the glory of its bar-parlours, and the oracle of its market ordinaries. Poor jovial old Tom Potts! you were a sad dog in your day: seldom sober; with no high notions of the dignity of your calling, but with a strong inclination towards the cold meat and strong beer of those towards whom you ought to have preserved 'an attitude of dignified impartiality.' But you did your work on the whole faithfully and honestly, by no means disdaining, when news was scarce and your pencil at rest, to 'fill up your time at case,' or scour the town in search of advertisements. One Tom Potts of my acquaintance, after many a hairbreadth 'scape, came at last to an untimely end by falling across a door-step, and cutting his throat on the sharp iron foot-scraper. Of another, it is related that, upon one occasion when walking by the Thames, he fell in and disappeared beneath its waters. Friends came up, but could see nothing of him; one, however, wiser or better acquainted with his habits than the rest, seized a pint-pot, which some one in the party happened to have, and stretched it over the water at the end of a long pole. There was a moment's suspense, and

then a hand was feebly raised from the river towards the glistening pewter. 'Ah,' said the knowing friend, 'I knew Tom couldn't resist *that*;' and straightway he plunged in and brought him out. Peace be to the ashes of the entire race. One cannot think of their failings without a kindly feeling; but they were a sad, disreputable set, and we may be thankful that their own favourite vices have killed them off so fast.

I might extend this paper to an illimitable length with reminiscences of different reporters in town and country, and with repetitions of the many good stories current regarding them. Not to transgress, however, upon the patience of the most forbearing of editors, let me briefly describe the ordinary career of a reporter. He begins life most probably as the 'devil' in some small weekly paper office; is taught short-hand by the Tom Potts of the establishment; and when the latter has succumbed to innumerable 'goes' of whisky, succeeds to his post. From the weekly paper he works his way to one of the less important dailies; and from it in turn he passes to Edinburgh, Leeds, Manchester, or Liverpool, where the reporters are in all respects the equals of their metropolitan brethren. Possibly, he settles down now for life,

rising in due time to a sub-editorship, or perhaps to the editorship of a small paper of his own. Generally, however, the prospect of easier work and better pay draws him to London, where he gains a place in the 'Gallery,' from which it has been well said, he can rise to anything.



IN THE GALLERY.

TO the press-man anywhere in the British Islands, there is but one Gallery—that which runs across one end of the House of Commons, at the back of the Speaker's chair. The visitor who has spent an evening in the Strangers' Gallery, at the other end of the House, has no doubt noticed this opposite Gallery and its occupants with some degree of curiosity. He has seen seated in it a score or two of men busily plying their pencils, and taking down, with unerring accuracy and marvellous rapidity, the utterances of the speakers on the floor of the House below. Whilst everywhere else throughout the House nothing having the appearance of business has presented itself to his view, in this portion of the chamber he cannot have failed to see with what steady regularity work—and that of a particularly arduous kind—is constantly being carried on. An evening in the Reporters' Gallery can hardly be less interesting than one spent in

the Strangers' Gallery ; and as admission to the former is confined to the privileged few, we may spend a few hours profitably in taking our readers over the spot, and in explaining to them the mysterious character of the work which is constantly being carried on there.

In the corner of New Palace Yard, a little behind the carriage entrance to the Houses of Parliament, there is a modest doorway. The man who has passed through that doorway once might easily look again for it, and look in vain. The doorway leads into a low dark passage, on one side of which a second door gives access to a long flight of stairs. Stumbling up these stone stairs till your legs ache, and you pant for breath, you reach a dimly lighted landing place. Through a swinging glass door, you see a low-roofed room—more like the cabin of a ship than an apartment in the palace of Westminster—in which are gathered half a dozen reporters, waiting for their 'turn.' This room is the 'den' of the keeper of the Gallery. A fire burns briskly in it, although the state of the temperature is not such as to require any artificial means of warmth. On the fire simmers a kettle, and you thereby see that this room is not used for literary pursuits, but is devoted to purposes not less important, though

perhaps less honourable—namely, those of eating and drinking. Two reporters, seated at one of the tables, are discussing the speech, which is even now being brought to a close in the House, between the intervals devoted by them to the consumption of tea and toast. Others, it may be, indulge in stronger potations ; but everywhere you see that in this outer chamber business is forgotten, and the minds of its occupants are unbent. It is very different in the next apartment to which you come, and which is even more cabin-like than the other. Oak-panelled walls and roof, swinging lamps, thick carpets, and fixed desks, make the resemblance to the ordinary style of naval architecture almost complete. You enter first a room of irregular shape, and you see on either side two smaller square rooms. Around the sides of all these rooms are fixed rows of desks, and here you perceive the reporters who have just left ‘the House’ engaged in converting their crooked cipher into ‘copy’ for the printers. Busy ‘leaders’—the leaders or chiefs of the different staffs of newspaper reporters—pass from one man to another, asking questions, giving information, and learning the amount of copy already supplied, or still required. Here and there, on a little table in one or other of the rooms, stands the dial box of a telegraph-machine, and these are

frequently resorted to by the leaders or their subordinates, who thus hold converse with the managing authorities at the offices of the different journals. Messengers are constantly coming and going, whose work it is to convey in Hansom cabs the copy already supplied by the reporters to the various newspaper offices in Fleet Street or Printing House Square. Little is to be heard save the scratching of the rapid pens as they fly over the paper; and everything about the room tells you that business has exclusive possession of the minds of its occupants.

In the middle of the centre room there is an oak screen. Passing behind this screen, the visitor finds himself face to face with a glass door, through which 'the House' itself can be seen: the door swings noiselessly upon its hinges to admit him, and he suddenly finds himself in 'the Gallery'—to reach which is the great ambition of the reporter's life. The Gallery itself consists of two rows of seats running across the end of the House. In the front row, each seat has a separate door of access, and is fitted with a desk, at which the reporter writes. The seats behind, though they are also supplied with narrow tables for writing purposes, are chiefly intended for the use of the reporter who is in waiting to relieve his colleague, and

are therefore not provided with accommodation like those in the front row. There are seven morning newspapers in London, each of which has its representatives in the Gallery. To each of these newspapers at least two boxes in the front row of seats are assigned. One box is occupied by the summary-writer of the paper, who sits there throughout the evening, and supplies the concise and readable history of the night's proceedings in Parliament which appears the next morning side by side with the full report ; the second box is occupied by the actual reporter for the time being, whose duty it is to take full short-hand notes of the speech which is being delivered, and who afterwards retires, either to the cabins behind the Gallery, or to rooms provided elsewhere in the House, to write out and condense his notes. The number of reporters attached to each newspaper varies considerably. The 'Times,' for instance, has fifteen men ; whilst the 'Daily Telegraph' and 'Daily News' have only five or six each. It need hardly be said, however, that the reports contained in the last-named papers do not aspire to the fulness which characterises those of the leading journal. The entire number of reporters who at different times during the evening take 'turns' in one or other of the boxes in the Gallery,

is about fifty. In addition to these, there are the summary-writers, whom we mentioned before, as well as the leader-writers attached to several of the morning papers, who always spend a few hours in the House whilst it is sitting, in order to obtain materials for their articles in next morning's paper.

As you sit in the back seats of the Gallery, and watch the occupants of the first row of boxes at their work, you see that at regular intervals the man in the front row is relieved by a colleague, who takes his place, and catching up the speaker at the very word where he was left by the last reporter, continues the report begun by his predecessor. This system of short 'turns' is one which is absolutely necessary in order to secure those full reports of parliamentary proceedings which appears in each morning's paper. A regular plan is drawn out weekly for the staff of each newspaper, according to which every reporter has fixed hours at which to begin his work, fixed hours at which to leave it, and fixed hours at which to resume it. He enters the Gallery, say, for the first time at seven o'clock in the evening; and according to the plan adopted by most newspapers, he leaves the box at half past seven o'clock. He immediately retires to one of the rooms behind, and there writes out his notes

for the printers. For this work of transcribing his notes from short-hand into long-hand, a certain period is allotted to him, at the end of which, whether he has completed his task of transcription or not, he must resume his seat in the Gallery, and take another 'turn' of half an hour or twenty minutes of reporting. In general, the time given to the reporters for writing out is more than sufficient for that purpose; and it is during the intervals of leisure which they thus enjoy that they resort to the little cabin which we entered first, and to another room at the bottom of the flight of stairs—said to be the original Star Chamber—where every accommodation for smoking is provided for them. The length to which the reporters have to extend their notes, however, varies greatly, and is seldom the same upon two occasions. A man may take his first 'turn' in the Gallery, may find the House in the possession of one of those speakers who are the recognised bores of Parliament. On such an occasion, he would receive instructions from his leader to make as little as possible of the speaker's remarks, so that his work might be completed even before he left the box. But his next 'turn' might find him face to face with Mr. Gladstone, Mr. Bright, Mr. Disraeli, or Mr. Lowe, and in this case his strength and ability would be

taxed to the utmost to complete the transcription of one 'turn' before the next commenced. Should he not succeed in doing so, he must resume his 'turn' in the Gallery at the appointed time, and when it is brought to a close, he must finish the transcription of his short-hand notes taken at the first 'turn' before he commences to write out those taken at his second. Such instances occur, however, very seldom—the time given to each reporter being sufficient for all ordinary occasions. Should a man be frequently behind-hand, he would, no doubt, soon receive an intimation from the chief of his staff that his services were no longer required.

A custom used formerly to prevail, and, indeed, still lingers in connection with some journals, by which the man whose last 'turn' began at one o'clock in the morning was made the victim for the rest of his brethren—that is, he had to sit till the House rose, however advanced the hour might be when that event occurred. It was found, however, that this system had many practical inconveniences, and once a most important episode in a debate was missed by almost all the morning papers, in consequence of the incompetence or laziness of the 'victim' for that time being. A reporter must, of course, exercise his discretion not

only in taking down what he hears, but also in writing out what he thinks most suitable for his paper. To attempt to report everything said in the House on one single evening, would be to astound the world at large—nobody being more astounded than the members themselves—and to fill the columns of the newspaper with utterly unreadable rubbish. Such an attempt was once made by a newly started paper, but the proprietor of the journal in question had to abandon his effort, which—if I am not much mistaken—landed him in the Bankruptcy Court. Indeed, the first proof of a good parliamentary reporter—as of a good reporter anywhere—is seen in the ability with which he can condense and revise the speech of which he has taken notes. Mr. Pitman—the inventor of a widely adopted system of short-hand—tells a good story of a tyro who took his seat for the first time in the Gallery upon a certain occasion. The speeches were long that night, and condensation was thus rendered even more necessary than usual.

‘How much have you got, sir?’ asked the leader of the staff of the beginner in question.

‘Oh, I have about two columns.’

‘Two columns! We can’t have more than half that at the outside!’

‘Indeed, sir,’ said the innocent, counting the pages of his note-book, and putting his thumb in the middle ; ‘then which half shall I take?’

It need hardly be said that this is not the mode of condensation usually adopted in newspaper reporting. One of the great difficulties of the parliamentary reporter is to be found in the fondness of honourable gentlemen for the use of Latin and Greek quotations. Many men in the Gallery are, however, at least on a par with the average members of the House in classical knowledge, and, moreover, constant communications are kept up between the Gallery and the body of the House, and any quotations which have failed to reach the ears of the reporters, are, as a rule, readily supplied by those who have used them. Of course, a good deal of bungling often occurs in this part of the reporter’s work, as is indeed inevitable. It is not always, however, the classical quotations which give the reporters greatest trouble. Everybody remembers that famous speech of Mr. Bright’s, in which he named the party of malcontents on the Liberal side of the House after the cave to which David retired from the frowns of his father-in-law. The biblical knowledge of the reporters was not equal to the strain put upon it by the adoption of this illustration, and next morning the reports in

one or two of the London newspapers were of such a character as to show that those who had written them had no very clear idea of the meaning of Mr. Bright's illustration.

'I say,' said the sub-editor to the chief of the reporting staff of one of these papers, 'do you think our fellows understood that quotation of Bright's? It struck me that they were rather hazy about it.'

'O yes,' was the immediate response. 'They understood it well enough. None of them can be so confoundedly ignorant as not to have read the "Arabian Nights!"'

But it is time that we saw the reporters at work out of the Gallery. We have had ample opportunity of seeing how closely they listen to the remarks made in the House, and how deftly they note everything down with pen or pencil. Let us now watch the process by which their short-hand notes are transformed into plain English characters in the columns of our morning newspapers. Very early in the evening, the little cabins behind the Gallery are filled by reporters who have taken their 'turn,' and who are writing out their turns. The accommodation provided for them here is of the most limited description—not one half of the whole number being able to obtain

seats at the same time. In order to supplement the provision made for them in the immediate vicinity of the Gallery, one of the committee-rooms—number 18—has been set apart after a certain hour for their use, and if you go in here at any time during the evening, you will see a score or so of reporters working as hard as they can at the dreary task of transcription. As fast as the 'slips' are written they are gathered up by the messengers of the different newspapers, who carry them off at stated intervals, and convey them either in cabs or on horseback to the newspaper offices, and deliver them into the hands of the printer.

This work goes on during the whole of the evening ; and so perfect are the arrangements, that often before a member has finished his speech in the House, the greater part of it is not only written out, but actually in type in more than one newspaper office. Without the system of short turns, this would, of course, be impossible. One peculiarity of the 'turn' system is, that great pains need to be taken to avoid mistakes arising from the 'turns' of different men being accidentally transposed. To prevent this, each man, ere he begins his report, heads his first slip of transcript with his own name and that of the reporter who has preceded him, thus : ' Jones follows Brown ; '

and he adds similar words to the last slip, thus : 'Smith follows Jones.' These words are of course, set up in type for the guidance of the printer ; and it sometimes happens that they find their way in consequence into the newspaper itself. On one celebrated occasion, Mr. Disraeli, who was depicting in glowing words the dangers to society arising from some act of the Liberal government, exclaimed, in the midst of his peroration : 'Then, sir, what follows?' This question was unexpectedly answered in one morning paper by the remarkable words : 'Green follows Robson.'

It is only of late years that the reporters have written out their notes in the House itself. Formerly, every man at the close of his 'turn' went to the office of his paper, and 'wrote out' there. The reporters of the 'Times,' after a certain hour of the evening, still adopt this plan, so that they are constantly hurrying to and fro between Printing-house Square and Westminster in the cabs which are always waiting in readiness for them at the bottom of the Gallery stairs. This system was found, however, to waste so much time, that it has been abandoned by the London press, with the exception of the paper to which I have just referred. The provincial press is represented

in the Gallery by the reporters of the Electric Press Association, who do those short summaries of the proceedings which are supplied by telegraph to the daily newspapers published in the provinces. These summaries are telegraphed from the House itself, and are sent so quickly and regularly, that I myself have known occasions on which the conclusion of a long debate has been received at a newspaper office three hundred miles from the House of Commons, ten minutes after the last speaker sat down. The whole of the newspaper offices in London are of course kept in constant communication with the House, so that editors and sub-editors know exactly, throughout the evening, what is going on there, and can at any moment provide for whatever emergencies may arise.

The Reporters' Gallery in the House of Lords is situated immediately beneath the Strangers' Gallery, and is much smaller and more inconvenient than that in the House of Commons. The truth is, however, that, alike in the estimation of newspapermen and of the general public, the proceedings in the upper chamber lack the interest and importance attaching to those in the lower. The reports of the proceedings of the Lords are, in consequence,

much more meagre, and the staff of reporters employed in producing them is much less numerous than that engaged in the House of Commons. Those who have spent an evening in the House of Lords must know that the reporter's work there is of a very disagreeable character. The chamber has been ingeniously constructed to afford those in it the least possible chance of hearing what is said, and the noble lords themselves are too much under the delusion that a conversational tone of voice is the highest style of oratory.



The annals of the Gallery are rich both in celebrated names and in amusing incidents. Though very many of those who work there are mere professional reporters, the end of whose ambition is reached when they have attained a seat in it, not a few are young men of talent, who take up parliamentary reporting as a means of support, whilst they are fighting their way at the bar, or in the higher branches of literature. Among those who have thus found the five or seven guineas a week—which is the usual stipend of the parliamentary reporter—a very seasonable addition to their income, may be mentioned the names of one lord-chancellor, Lord Campbell; two judges, Mr. Justice Talfourd, and Mr. Justice Hannen; and not a

few eminent Q.C.s, some of whom are now living, and occupy seats in the House of Commons, the proceedings of which they were glad to report in early days.

But the most celebrated of all the men who at one time or another took notes in the Gallery is the great novelist to whom we are indebted for the creation of Mr. Pickwick and Little Nell. There are still in the Gallery of the House veterans who remember the days when Charles Dickens sat by their side, as a member of the reporting staff of the 'Morning Chronicle,' which had then the crack corps of the House of Commons. Mr. Dickens has left us not a few reminiscences of his reporting days, some of which have been judiciously embodied by Mr. Forster in his life of the great novelist.

There are many good stories told respecting the Gallery. Many have doubtless heard of the old reporter who, in the midst of a dull debate, suddenly called out for the Speaker to favour the House with a song! Another gentleman, engaged in the House of Lords, having heard one statesman of repute state that another had introduced a bill 'with indecent haste,' headed his report with the words: 'Charge of Indecency against Lord

So-and-so ;' whilst a third, who had been told that profane language was on no account to be admitted into his reports, once destroyed the effect of one of O'Connell's finest pieces of oratory by printing the word 'damned,' when used in its most legitimate sense, in the form in which it usually appears in our police reports.



OUR SPECIAL WIRE.

A STAID newspaper proprietor of the old school—a representative of the times when advertisements were taxed, the stamp-duty reigned supreme, and fast-flying Hoes were unknown—would be greatly discomfited were he permitted to revisit the glimpses of the moon, and note the changes that have occurred since his day in the department of periodical literature. Change succeeds change so rapidly, that we have not time to reflect upon their significance; and it not unfrequently happens that we are plunged into, and become reconciled to, a state of things which but a short time previous seemed unattainable. Perhaps in no sphere of modern energy is advancement more marked and astonishing than in that of the daily newspaper. The last ten years have created a revolution. The penny paper of to-day is, for size, cheapness, and accuracy of information, as much superior to the bi-weekly sheets of fifteen years

ago, as our railways are to lumbering stage-coaches. The amount of energy, money, enterprise, and intellectual activity, expended every twenty-four hours upon the collection and issue of the current news, is something marvellous.

The most noticeable improvement upon the press of recent years is the large and growing extent to which the electric telegraph is employed as an auxiliary force. The introduction of this element promises in a short time to effect as vast an alteration in the conduct and management of the daily newspaper as has been wrought by the Hoe printing-machine. Even under the present system—and it may be said to be only in its infancy—nothing of importance transpires in the three kingdoms that is not flashed to the great centres of intelligence in the large towns. If an eminent politician make a speech late at night at Manchester, Liverpool, or Bristol, it is reported and transmitted to London, Edinburgh, and Glasgow, appearing next morning in the columns of journals hundreds of miles away from the place where it was spoken. If a crime or accident of magnitude occur in any quarter of the empire accessible to the telegraph, the details are carefully collected, written out into a narrative, and sent off on the wings of the lightning. The most enterprising prints in the empire in this respect

are those of Edinburgh and Glasgow. Three of the daily newspapers in the former city, and two in the latter, have what are called 'special wires' for the transmission of important information from London. The compact entered into between the newspaper proprietors and the Government gives to each newspaper the sole and exclusive control of one wire from seven in the evening till three o'clock the following morning. A sum amounting to close upon a thousand pounds per annum is charged for each separate wire, including the services of two clerks to work the instruments. This large outlay merely represents what is paid to the Government, and is exclusive of the expense of collecting the news, with which that corporation has nothing whatever to do.

As a rule, the wires commence work at seven o'clock precisely, and are generally kept going, with slight intermissions, till three in the morning. If the wire be in good working-order, and not affected by accident or the weather, between five and six columns of matter can be transmitted by each wire—no despicable feat, when it is remembered that every line of that large quantity of material has to be written out in manuscript for the use of the printers. But should the weather be stormy, and the electric current be affected, great difficulty

is experienced in transmitting a single column. A practised newspaper reporter considers the writing out of four columns of a speech between seven o'clock at night and three o'clock in the morning as a good average achievement. The telegraph clerk has, however, a very material advantage over the reporter, and can write considerably more than that quantity within the same time. The clerk writes as it were to dictation. He has no trouble in condensing, improving, or altering the sentences of his speaker, and can consequently transcribe straight on without pause or loss of time.

Two small bells are attached to the telegraph instrument, which speak as with brazen tongue to the practised ear of the clerk. All the words in the language can be swiftly and correctly represented by distinct intonations of the bells. Sound is the medium of conveyance by which the clerk reads the messages that are sent to him. He has merely to listen to the tune played upon the bells, and write down the words as if they were dictated by the human voice. To the uninitiated, the silvery tintinnabulation of the bells is a mere jumble of musical notes; but the disciplined clerk follows the sounds as unerringly as though they were spoken; and without lifting his eyes from the paper, writes by the ear page after page of manuscript. Clerks

who are expert at their profession, can, by the aid of numerous contractions, write as fast as their collaborators at the other end can transmit ; and if the wire is good, the longest speech that is ordinarily delivered in parliament, can be sent from London to the north. But if the receiving-clerk is slow at penmanship, pauses are frequently made by the despatcher, to enable him to keep pace.

The wires by which the news is sent down to the Scotch papers go through Manchester, and follow the west-coast route. There is no break in the chain of communication. The transmitter telegraphs from the metropolis ; and the transcriber receives the message in the capital of Scotland without interruption, as though the distance traversed were forty instead of being four hundred miles. The Edinburgh news goes round by Glasgow, touching as it were in its flight the skirts of the great city of the west, and flashing back instantaneously to Edinburgh. At first sight, it seems a roundabout method to send messages from London to Edinburgh through Glasgow ; but it is not so in reality. The necessity arises from the course followed by the telegraph posts. By this arrangement, Edinburgh, instead of being, as is popularly supposed, nearer London than Glasgow, is more distant by forty miles. This, however,

makes no difference, so far as transmission is concerned. The strength of the electric current is, for all working purposes, as good at Edinburgh as it is at Glasgow.

When telegraphing was less known than it now is, it was held to be impossible to transmit uninterruptedly between two points so far distant, and the belief was, that the news was first sent to Manchester, and written out by a clerk there, and then re-transmitted to Scotland. This is a fallacy. Occasionally, a wire going the longer distance gets feeble from atmospheric causes, and the signals are not sufficiently intelligible to the clerk who is receiving them. This, however, is caused by the weather, and not by the distance traversed ; and the remedy is to try other wires, with the view of testing whether they are in better condition. The best is then worked for the rest of the morning ; but should all be equally bad, then occurs a 'break-down ;' the clerks fold their arms, and give up their instruments in despair ; and the newspaper apologises to its readers for being unable to control electricity, so as to make its action independent of the elements.

The Scotch daily press may now be said to be sub-edited in London. The metropolis is yearly becoming more important to it, and, if matters

proceed as they have begun, the time is not far distant when the editorial chairs themselves will be transferred to the south. As it is, this result is all but achieved, for when the occasion demands such a procedure, leading articles are written in London, and despatched by the wires. Strangely would it have sounded in the ears of our forefathers, who derived their information at intervals few and far between from the modest news-letter, had they been told that the time was at hand when events transpiring at midnight four hundred miles away from their place of residence would be fully detailed at seven o'clock the next morning in the local newspaper, which makes its appearance simultaneously with the morning coffee. Even to us, it seems somewhat odd that the sub-editors and reporters of the Edinburgh and Glasgow press should be employed in London, the fruit of their labours this evening being sent off to the printers in Scotland, for to-morrow morning. And yet this remarkable process goes on every evening of the week. Whilst Edinburgh sleeps tranquilly, the telegraph-clerk at Princes Street is writing to the dictation of his comrade in Threadneedle Street, describing perhaps a murder that only two hours before threw Whitechapel into consternation ; setting down the details of a fire that, as he writes,

is casting its red gleam over the Thames ; giving the *ipsissima verba* of the beginning of Mr. Disraeli's speech on the Irish Church, while yet the roof of the House of Commons is ringing with the lusty cheers of his followers. On exciting parliamentary nights, it has happened that the compositors in the metropolis of Scotland were putting in type the first column of an oration by Mr. Bright or Mr. Gladstone while these gentlemen were yet speaking at Westminster. Puck has not so much to boast of, after all, in putting a girdle round the earth in forty minutes. We are outstripping even the dream of the poets.

The electric wires are exerting a deep and extensive influence over the provinces. Within the last three years, they have brought Edinburgh within two-score miles of London. Metaphorically, the printers may be said to lift their type from Threadneedle and Moorgate Streets, where the telegraph-offices are situated. Auld Reekie has her hand upon that mighty heart of the metropolis described by Wordsworth, and registers its faintest throbs. The result is, that our Scotch newspapers are becoming more cosmopolitan and imperial in their tone. Their provincialism is decreasing. The quantity of news nightly despatched from the south has had the effect of decreasing the amount

of space formerly devoted to purely local intelligence. The craving of the public for the latest and newest information has caused the newspaper editors to give it the utmost prominence. Hence it sometimes happens that the whole available space devoted to news is occupied with that which is transmitted by telegraph.

People accustomed to while away a pleasant half-hour in scanning the newspapers over the breakfast-table, have little conception of the great amount of expenditure which the penny represents. First of all, there is the eight or ten hundred pounds paid annually for the simple use of the wire. Large as this sum is, it is but about two-thirds of the total outlay. The wire of itself is useless unless it is kept supplied with matter that is useful and interesting to the public. The real work and difficulty of the undertaking is to procure full and accurate records of passing events. Probably none but those who are professionally engaged upon the press are aware of what the collection of news in such a Babylon as London really means. The immense size of the place, the important meetings and demonstrations that are held in it, and the interest attaching to it as being the great centre of the civilised world, make the work of daily gathering information both

necessary and arduous. The proceedings of parliament in these stirring days of politics naturally attract much attention, and must be carefully recorded. The money market and the most authentic commercial rumours also claim to be fully reported. Sporting, on the other hand, has become so deeply rooted in the national character, that daily descriptions of its prospects and achievements are absolutely essential. The tattle and rumours of the clubs, moreover, call for the ready pen of the experienced correspondent. And, in addition to all these special departments, there is the wide field of general news to be cultivated.

To overtake such labours, the Scotch daily newspapers have each an organised staff of reporters, sub-editors, and correspondents in the metropolis, varying in number, according to the means of the journal, from two to five. One man redacts the evening papers, taking from them any items of general interest; a second is specially charged with the collection of news of a later date, which does not appear in the night editions; a third reports the proceedings before the Private Bills' Committees; and a fourth describes the scenes in parliament on the occasions of an exciting division or ministerial crisis. Then, again, a special and independent staff is organised to report Scotch

debates and speeches on questions of great public interest in the House of Commons.

During the parliamentary session, Westminster is, of course, the centre whence emanates the largest and most important portion of the news that is despatched by special wire. The telegraph-offices being all in the City, messengers have to be employed who go and come regularly between Cornhill and Palace Yard during the night, Hansom cabs being employed on busy nights to convey them to and fro, in order to expedite the messages. The manuscript is enclosed in large envelopes, bearing printed directions, and addressed to the clerk in charge of the special telegraph department, who opens each parcel, registers in a book the number of pages that are sent, and the hour at which he receives them, and then hands them over to the subordinates for transmission. When several important meetings and events take place, as is frequently the case, on the same day, the clerks are swamped with 'copy.' Print and manuscript to twice the amount that can be sent off within the regulated time, arrive in hot haste by successive messengers, each correspondent having written what came within the scope of his department at full length, regardless of the fact that space required to be reserved for his collaborators. On

these occasions, the sub-editor's authority comes into action. He selects what is most important, despatches it first, and abridges the rest so as to insure its being sent off.

Notwithstanding every precaution, mistakes and blunders are of frequent occurrence. Unfortunately telegraph wires cannot be completely controlled or in every respect depended upon with the accuracy of mechanism that is not subject to volatile and disturbing influences. The best-laid plans are often frustrated. There is a storm in the north, the weather is unpropitious at Manchester, and the wires go wrong. Neither skill nor persuasion avails to get any work out of them. The currents are interrupted, and the signals are so faint at Glasgow that nothing can be made of them. In these cases, the labours of the correspondents go for nought; the piles of manuscript lie unused, and the newspaper readers are deprived of their accustomed food. Such disasters are aggravated when they occur on very important nights, when Gladstone or Lowe speaks upon the Reform question, the Chancellor of the Exchequer introduces his Budget, the Naval Review in honour of the Sultan takes place at Spithead, or some dreadful tragedy is enacted in the metropolis. Then may be seen the representatives of the various news-

papers going about the telegraph-offices, in a state of grief and distraction, impugning the divine government of the world, and anathematising the ill-luck which has caused them to spend their strength in vain. The agony of the correspondent is, however, the fierce joy and time of gratulation of the telegraph-clerk. Kept uninterruptedly at hard and continuous labour for eight hours each evening, he keenly enjoys the sweets of relaxation, and rubs his hands with satisfaction when the opportunity for such occurs. He delights in the elemental strife which renders his wire for the time useless, folds his arms, lights his pipe, and passes the hours in entertaining chat.

If a record were kept of the whimsical blunders that are constantly occurring in connection with the special wires, a most amusing *Joe Miller* might easily be compiled. The matter often arrives so late at its destination, that there is no time for correction of the press, and the public are consequently treated to much that is equally humorous and inexplicable. The reader, for instance, comes across the following sentence, and is much disquieted: 'The speeches in the Reform debate threaten to stretch to the crack of the door.' He may ruminate upon the matter as long as memory holds her seat in his distracted

globe, without being able to solve the mystery. The correspondent in London alone has the key, and the knowledge of the fact that he wrote 'crack of doom.' Telegraph-clerks, however, in the full heat and fervour of their driving, should not be held responsible for a knowledge of Shakspeare.

Again, one might think that the House had forgotten its dignity, and the marvels of the olden time had again come back, upon seeing the statement in prominent type that 'Colonel Taylor, the Conservative Whip, has forty members on his back who are desirous of speaking in the great debate;' the words 'on his back' being, of course, a sapient substitution for 'on his book.' Paterfamilias may, if he be sedulous in politics, have to lament the questionable delicacy of such a sentence as: 'Mr. Lowe made a furious attack upon the Treasury Bench, and succeeded in touching the shirts of the government;' the latter being a transmogrification of 'vexing the skirts of the government.' In like manner, 'Each says' suffers a sea-change, and comes forth to the sun as 'Sach says,' and is looked upon as the name of a possible German professor. Grammarians not unfrequently have their parsing powers tested by the examination of such sentences as these: 'The weather at Newmarket to-day was so favourable, the sky being

dull and clouded, while torrents of rain fell very frequently, much interest attached to the Biennial, Friponnier's defeat was the topic on the course.'

Amusing incidents also crop up incidentally in connection with the wires. The London correspondent of one of the newspapers has a room at one of the telegraph stations in which he does his work and superintends the wire generally. The station in question is situated within a building containing a large range of chambers and public offices. The outer door leading to the various landings is closed at night, and a hall-porter is stationed on duty to attend to visitors. Upon one occasion, the hall-porter fell asleep, and the correspondent rang the bell in vain; he was unable to procure admittance. Far aloft, near the top of the building, the telegraph-clerk plied his vocation beyond the reach of the vexing influence of the bell. Peacefully the hall-porter enjoyed the oblivious repose of his great stuffed chair; all the bells of Bow would not have awakened him from the serenity of his dreams. The correspondent was in despair; time was going fast, and in a little time his special information would be of no avail. In a moment of inspiration, the thought suddenly struck him to ask the people in Glasgow to open the door in London. He rushed to a telegraph-office, and desired the clerk in Glasgow

to telegraph to the clerk in London that the porter was asleep, and the door barred. This was done. The clerk, sitting high aloft in his cage at the top of the mansion, immediately left his instrument, descended and awoke the porter; the door was opened, and the heavy stone of anxiety was rolled away from the mind of the tremulous correspondent.

An experience of an equally humorous character befell the same gentleman on another occasion. The London clerk was telegraphing furiously to Glasgow one night, when he discovered that his colleague in that city was paying no heed to his messages. It is customary for the man at one end to send back repeating signals to the man at the other, to show that all is going well. On the night in question, however, no such signals came. The transmitter in London demanded the reason, and asked whether the receiver was not at his post; but there was no response—the wire was dumb. Suddenly, the secret flashed upon the mind of the correspondent: the clerk at Glasgow was lying intoxicated by the side of his instrument! The indefatigable correspondent rushed off to another telegraph-office, and despatched a message to his employers, telling them from London what they did not know in Glasgow, that their clerk was asleep; and in the course of a short time the special wire was working with its accustomed regularity.

*THE STORY OF THE FOGBOROUGH
ENGLISHMAN.*

‘THERE’S nothing like a good name,’ said Mr. Cuttle, the wholesale cheesemonger; ‘and I goes in for the best of all names. I’m an Englishman myself, and I say an Englishman let it be.’ And then the worthy man thumped the table with emphasis, and looked round for the applause which was due to his patriotic speech.

‘Don’t you think that’s rayther general?’ said Mr. Meek, the haberdasher of Pulpit Place in a diffident tone.

‘General, sir! What do you mean? *You’re* not general, are you? And you’re an Englishman?’ The eminent Cuttle objected to Mr. Meek on principle. ‘He’s only ‘alf-an’-‘alf,’ he was wont to say by way of explaining his sentiments towards the haberdasher. ‘My opinion is he wouldn’t mind goin’ over to the Blues if he could make it pay.’

Now, I am not prepared to vouch for the complete relevancy of Cuttle’s retort upon Meek; but

it is at least certain that like Malvolio's wound, it was 'enough,' and we all agreed without more ado that the name of the new 'organ' of the Radical party of Fogborough should be 'the Englishman.' And 'the Englishman' it was.

'I proposes,' said Mr. Cuttle, after a while, 'that young Green there look after the editorial part of the organ. He's plenty of time on his hands, and he ought to be doin' somethin' for the party.'

This was the way in which it came to pass that I found myself described in the prospectus of the 'Fogborough Englishman Company (Limited),' as managing director. My proper business was with the law; but at the call of one's country, or at least of one's party, a man must be ready to make some sacrifice. Everybody knew that in the firm of Green and Son, I made but an insignificant figure. My father did the real work; and I was looked upon as an appendage, ornamental perhaps, but certainly not useful, to the business. Enough of myself, however. This is the story of the 'Fogborough Englishman,' and not of Thomas Green the Younger.

Of all the harassing months I ever spent in my life, that which preceded the first appearance of what old Cuttle insisted upon calling 'the organ,' was the worst. A man who is about to be married,

or about to emigrate, or about to be hanged, has no doubt a great many things to do in a very little space of time ; but he is at leisure, absolutely and entirely, as compared with the wretch who is concerned in starting a daily paper. Fogborough, as you doubtless know, possesses two daily papers in addition to that the story of which I am about to tell. There was the 'Sentinel,' which was *the* paper of the district, old Whig in principles, very stiff and very stately, owned by a firm of wealthy merchants, who never grudged expense in improving their journal. We objected to it, because it was not Liberal enough for us. And we objected still more strongly to the 'Fogborough Sun,' because it was an out-and-out Tory paper. We Radicals were entirely misrepresented, and that was why we made up our minds to come out with the 'Englishman.'

Happily I had nothing to do with the mechanical part of the arrangements. Brown and Cuttle, two of my fellow-directors, undertook to secure an office—which they did, at the bottom of a particularly dirty court—and fit up the necessary machinery. All that fell to my duty was to secure the literary staff, as we very grandly designated the editor, sub-editor, and three reporters, whom we felt it necessary to engage to conduct our organ. I began my work by advertising in all the London

papers. Two days afterwards, when I went down to my office, I found the small boy in the outer room grinning from ear to ear.

‘The postman says he’s coming again in half an hour, sir, with the rest of them,’ said he.

‘The rest of what?’ I asked.

For reply he pointed to my desk, and there I saw a heap of letters which would have filled a clothes-basket, sprawling over it in every direction. You may imagine that my heart sank within me when I began to read them! How I toiled on and on, day after day, and how disgusted I was at the end of the third day, with the result of my labours, must I think be left to your imagination. What wonderful letters they were! Those applying for the post of editor were the most curious. The men who merely aspired to be reporters on the paper were for the most part sensible fellows, who knew what they were about, and who had some notion that a man does not become a full-blown newspaper reporter in a single night. But the would-be editors! I had applications from twelve clergymen of the Church of England, sixteen Dissenting ministers, two sons of lords, three brothers of baronets, four doctors, thirty-two barristers, a Catholic priest, a German refugee, and seventy broken-down clerks, shopkeepers, auctioneers, and

schoolmasters. Of the whole of these not one had ever had any experience in editing, and I do not believe that any one of them had ever written a leading article for a newspaper in the course of their lives.

The remainder of the applications for the editorship came from certain literary men (some of them men with whose names I was well acquainted), and from four persons who really had been editors, and who, at least, knew what they were applying for. I was terribly puzzled and perplexed, for my four practical men upon further enquiry all turned out to have little weaknesses of their own. One of them had been convicted of bigamy; two were given to drink; and the fourth, when he discovered that the paper was a joint-stock one, said 'He'd be d——d if he'd have anything to do with a parcel of bullying directors.'

Up to that moment I had imagined that a good editor was to be found as easily as gooseberries in spring. I began to tremble as I thought that I might have to study the whole of the batch of miscellaneous applications in search of some one suited for the post, or still worse! that I might have to advertise again.

One afternoon whilst I was sitting in a state of great gloom, wondering whether I shouldn't be

driven to edit the paper myself, the boy announced Mr. Kitt.

Now Mr. Kitt, or as we always called him in Fogborough, 'Dirty Tom Kitt,' was the sub-editor of the Tory paper, the 'Sun.' He was, as I well knew, an out-and-out little rogue. That 'Sun' was a paper that never stuck at a trifle when it wanted to serve its own purpose, and Tom Kitt was the man who did all its dirty work. Bless you! He thought no more of insinuating that you hadn't paid your debts, or that you were in the habit of beating your wife, than he did of taking his dinner. Cuttle used to come off very badly in those days in the columns of the 'Sun;' and many a spiteful little paragraph has Tom Kitt inserted in it about the blunders of his grammar and the badness of his cheese. When I heard that the vagabond had ventured into my office, which he had once described as 'the secret chamber where conspiracies against the Throne and the Church were daily hatched,' I felt inclined to order the clerks to kick him downstairs. But I wanted to know what his business was, and so I didn't. My own impression was that he had been sent by the opposite side as a spy, to discover how we were getting on with our arrangements for the publication of the 'Englishman.'

He came in with an oily smile on his face that I by no means liked, and I was quite astonished to find how humbly affable he could be to a man whom he had described as 'a black-hearted Catiline,' and 'a viper of the meanest breed,' less than a month before. But what was my astonishment when I found out his business. He wanted the sub-editorship of the 'Englishman' himself.

When I first heard him propose that we should take him into our employment, I felt as if I could have kicked him out, without waiting for the clerk to do it. But second thoughts were best. No doubt it was a horrible piece of treachery for 'Dirty Tom Kitt' to wish to exchange his True Blue paper and politics for our 'organ;' but, after all, he was a practical man, and we wanted nothing so much at that moment as a man who knew something of newspaper work. So I told Tom I would consult the directors about it; and the end was that we engaged him as sub-editor at a salary of four pounds a week.

I never could quite get over the dislike I felt when I found myself near him. You see a man doesn't like to be called a viper and a Catiline by anybody, and I always thought of those words when Tom Kitt came near me. But there, bless you! Tom himself thought nothing of it. You see

he had abused the whole of us, at one time or another; but as he coolly said when he appeared before the directors on being appointed, 'He intended to let by-gones be by-gones, and to forget all about the Blues.' You would have thought that *he* had been injured by us, from the way in which he spoke.

However, much as I disliked him, I found him a wonderfully valuable fellow. He engaged the reporters for me, and so set my mind at rest on that score. Two of these gentlemen, by-the-by, came with him from the 'Sun.' I never was more astonished in my life than at the easy way in which these newspaper fellows seem to throw off their old politics like an old hat.

There only remained an editor to be got. Lord! what work I had before I could pitch upon the right one. At last I got a tip-top sort of fellow. His name was Legrand, and by his own account he was related to half the peerage. And he had been in half the world also. The last place he hailed from was London (for of course Cuttle insisted upon our having a London man), but before that he had been in America, Australia, Constantinople, and Heaven knows where. He was a fine-looking fellow, big, and handsome, with a bounce about him which impressed even Cuttle,

and a score of the best testimonials any man could have. Didn't we think we had caught a prize ?

When the eve of our first publication day came, you should have seen the office. All the directors were there ; and I must confess that more champagne was going than was good for us. But we worked for it, I can assure you. There was old Cuttle in one corner, making up the cash-book for the day, and reckoning how much money we'd got in already for advertisements ; in another, old Meek was reading proofs. (The champagne *had* been too much for him, however, which accounts for the awful mistakes there were in the paper next morning.) As for me, I was directing franks, as they call the slips of paper you wrap round the newspapers when they are sent by post.

Tom Kitt was in great feather ! I think I never saw any man in my life so dirty as he was that day. His face looked as if it hadn't been washed for a month ; he had put on what he called his 'office-coat,' which was the raggedest thing that could be got to hold together by tapes and pins, and he had thrown off his collar and neckerchief. But I must say for Tom that he worked like a Briton. He was cutting out paragraphs one moment, writing summaries the next, then talking to the reporters, and finally bullying the overseer

of the printing department. Perhaps it was this zeal, or perhaps it was the champagne, which made me feel kinder to Tom than I had ever done before. At any rate I caught myself slapping him on his back, and calling him by his Christian name before the night was over.

Mr. Legrand, as befitted a swell with a thousand a-year—for that was the salary we had promised him—sat in his own room among the champagne bottles, and didn't seem to make much of all the fuss that was going on ; though he invited all the directors to hear him read his leader, which, barring the fact that it might have done as well for a newspaper at the other end of England as for the 'Fogborough Englishman,' was a beautiful production ; 'equal to the "Daily Telegraph,"' said old Cuttle, who read that paper regularly.

After all the drinking of healths, and the row and bother, I got up the next morning with a bad headache. But I was more than rewarded when the maid brought to me at the breakfast table the damp neatly-folded first number of the 'Fogborough Englishman.' 'Take these away,' said I, pointing to the copies of that day's 'Sentinel,' and 'Sun,' which lay beside my own paper ; and wasn't I proud when I unfolded the sheet, and felt that I had got my own 'organ' at last.

I'm sorry to say that before the day was over a good many people had looked in to chaff me about one or two little blunders that had crept into the first number. For instance, we had put old Mrs. Methuselah's death at the age of ninety-two under the head of births, and by running two paragraphs on together we had made the Bishop of Darkshire appear to have been fined five shillings and costs for drunkenness. However, as Legrand explained to me, these were merely 'mechanical blunders,' which would occur even in the best-regulated establishments, and which practical newspaper men in time got to think nothing at all about.

There was one very funny blunder, however, which I couldn't make out at all. Right in the middle of the leader, a sentence began with these words, 'Speaking as we do in the midst of this great town of Dulminster.' Now Dulminster was in another county at least a hundred miles off, and it seemed the strangest thing in the world that it should have been mentioned in that way in a Fogborough newspaper. Legrand assured me that the compositor who 'set' that part of the article must have come from Dulminster, and that it must have been through his absence of mind that the one name had been printed instead of the other. With that explanation I was forced to be content.

It was not so satisfactory the next morning, however, to get a letter from the Bishop of Dark-shire, threatening me—for my name was at the foot of the paper—with a criminal information for libel, if I didn't publish a most abject apology which he enclosed for my signature. These bishops are a bad lot! I signed the apology, and forthwith asked Legrand to write in favour of their being turned out of the House of Lords. But Legrand didn't do it. Instead of a stinging article about the 'loaves and fishes,' and what John Bright called the 'adulterous union' of Church and State, there was an article that I am sure nobody would care to read, on the subject of national debts. It was a sound article no doubt; but then nobody was thinking about national debts at that moment.

My mortification at finding that Legrand didn't do as we told him was nothing, however, to Cuttle's, when he had a week later the same cause of complaint against him. Cuttle lived in a part of Fogborough which was in the parish of a High Church parson, who made himself obnoxious by persecuting the dissenters. One day he had said something about apostolical succession that made old Cuttle nearly lose his senses. He brought the report to Legrand, and with a flourish slapped it on his table, and said, 'There's a subject for you, for to-morrow!'

The editor, who was fiddling away with a beautiful diamond ring which had just made its appearance on his finger, simply said,

‘Ah! Mr. Cuttle, I’m afraid you are too late for to-morrow. I have an article in type on the subject of the Roumanian difficulty.

‘Let it stand over, then,’ said Cuttle, as blunt as you please, ‘and write one about this instead.’

Legrand looked only half pleased at the way in which Cuttle spoke, and I thought he was going to ride the high horse ; but he didn’t. All he said was,

‘If you’ll leave the extract with me, I’ll see what I can do with it.’

What a rage Cuttle was in next morning, when he found that it was the Roumanian difficulty, after all, that the leader was about. He would have gone straight off and had a row with Legrand if I hadn’t pointed out that it wouldn’t do any good. But two days later he was beaming with delight, for I must say there was an uncommonly good thing about the parson’s speech in the ‘Englishman.’ It was so good that, as we all agreed, no one who saw it could doubt that a London man had written it.

After this none of us could do enough for Legrand. He was dining at one or other of our houses every night, and was trotted out every-

where, as a great card. He bought a horse, and began to swell about the town on it; he took what he called 'chambers' in the best hotel in Fogborough—for he was a single man—and soon there wasn't a creature in the place that didn't know the editor of the 'Englishman' by sight.

There was one thing, however, that didn't please us. We used to pitch into the 'Sentinel'—'that worn-out organ of a worn-out faction,' as we always called it every day; but it wouldn't take any notice of us. If we could only have got it to answer us again, our fortunes would have been made. But they had a long-headed beast of a Scotchman there as editor; a fellow who looked as contemptible a cur by the side of Legrand, as ever you saw in your life; and he was far too sharp to play our game. Day after day we had letters, paragraphs, and leaders, abusing the 'Sentinel'; but the 'Sentinel' never so much as acknowledged that we existed.

All this time Tom Kitt did his work well. He wormed out all sorts of secrets about the Tories, and we published them all, and every now and then he gave us a spicy bit about his old friends, that must have riled them. It was Joe Hall, the Conservative agent, that was 'Catiline' and 'the viper' now. As for our reporters, I had little bother with them. Their chief business seemed to be to take

care that we didn't miss a murder ; and I verily believe that one of them always lived at the police office in the expectation of one turning up.

We had lots of annoyances of different kinds, I can assure you. That 'Sentinel,' which never cared how much it spent, used constantly to beat us in news ; and as a consequence, our circulation, which had been very good at first, began after a while to fall off. Then we had three different actions for libel brought against us at the same time, and they cost a pretty penny. Next, we couldn't get the advertising people to come to us. If they gave us advertisements at all, they would only give us about half what they paid the 'Sentinel,' for inserting them. The money, in fact, went out a great deal faster than it came in ; and we soon found it necessary to make a call upon our shareholders. 'That, however, was only what must be expected when a party's got a organ of its own,' said old Cuttle. So we paid up without a murmur.

But after a while things did not seem to be going on as pleasantly as we could like. Legrand, we found, was running fine rigs out of doors. Cuttle had found him making love to his daughter ; he had got in debt to the tune of a couple of hundreds at his hotel, and they were constantly dunning him ; and then the leaders—well the leaders got

worse and worse. At first they had been very good ; now there was hardly ever a decent one in the paper. If there was, it was always on some old subject that had almost been forgotten. One day, however, when I read the paper in the morning I found that it had a splendid article in. I was delighted with it. 'Here's Legrand getting back to his old form,' said I, to my wife ; and then I read the whole thing to her. I hadn't been in the office half-an-hour, when Tom Kitt came to see me 'on very private business' he said.

'What's the matter, Tom ?' I said, for I had become quite friendly with him.

'Matter, sir !' said Tom ; 'Look at this.' He pulled out that morning's 'Englishman' and pointed to the article.

'Well,' said I, 'you have nothing to say against that, have you ? I thought it one of the best articles we ever had in the paper.'

'And well you might,' was Tom's reply ; 'for I'll show you where he got it from ;' and with that he pulled out a copy of the 'Times' of the day before, and there, word for word, was the self-same article ! That was not all, however. Tom Kitt was a 'cute fellow : it wasn't for nothing that he had been watching Legrand, ever since he came into the office, and now he was able to tell me that

our precious editor (to whom we were paying a salary that we had found out to be far too high) was nothing better than an impostor. When he first came down to Fogborough, he got all our articles sent from London, and that was how the word Dalminster had slipped into the first! It had been written by some friend of his who didn't know one town from the other. But in course of time, as Legrand became hard up, he ceased to get his leaders written in London. He cobbled them together, anyway, from half-a-dozen other newspapers, and when he wanted a good one, stole it bodily from some distant newspaper. I suppose success had made him bold, and at last he had 'cribbed' this one from the 'Times.'

When Tom had told me the story, I confess I wished the blessed paper had never been thought of. It had been nothing but loss and botheration to us from the very first. However, when a man makes up his mind to serve his party, he must be prepared to suffer, as I now found. I didn't know what to do with Legrand, for the scoundrel had got a year's engagement from us. But he saved me all trouble on that score. As soon as he knew that I had found out his tricks, he quietly bolted from Fogborough, in debt to almost every tradesman in the town, and with an overdrawn account,

so far as his salary was concerned, of 300*l*. I would have proceeded against him, but for one thing. I found that to bring him back to Fogborough would be dangerous, for Mary Cuttle had fallen desperately in love with him. I wished the girl no harm, and so I let the villain go, and a good riddance he was. Of course I soon found that all his plausible tales and testimonials were mere shams. I ought to have found that out at first; but I didn't; so I need say nothing more about it.

We agreed to make Tom Kitt editor, temporarily, until we could fill Legrand's place. But Tom was no more the man for the work than I was. He could write stinging paragraphs, and he didn't need to use his scissors when he was writing a leader, for I promise you he could spin out yarns to any length; but the stuff he wrote was so full of bad English, and worse Latin, and was besides so coarse and violent, that he would have ruined the paper in no time, if we had allowed him to go on. He got us into about two actions for libel every week, and one of them having gone for trial, we had to pay 400*l*. damages, and as much more costs. Then he offended some of our best supporters; he quarrelled with the reporters and the foreman, and very soon the place became so hot that I felt we couldn't get on with him at all.

We resolved to give him notice to leave. What did the rascal do but insist that he had been appointed editor of the paper, when he was temporarily placed in charge after Legrand left us, and he demanded a year's salary at the rate of a thousand pounds, as the only condition on which he would leave us. I laughed at him as an impudent scoundrel, when he made the claim. He heard me laugh, but said nothing. Next day, however, I had a letter from his attorney, offering to submit his case to arbitration. I was so sure of a decision in our favour that I agreed; the case went before an arbitrator, and we lost! Tom had brought about fifty vagabonds from all the papers in the neighbourhood to prove what they called 'the custom of the profession,' and the arbitrator ruled against us on that point.

So I was once more on my beam-ends with neither editor nor sub-editor—the reporters were now doing the work temporarily—and with a balance against us for the six months during which the paper had existed, of nearly 4,000*l*. This was not all, however. Between Legrand and Tom Kitt, the 'Englishman' had become the laughing-stock of Fogborough; and the very shareholders were constantly abusing the unhappy directors, and myself especially, for the way in which we were man-

aging the paper. Nothing but a sense of one's duty to one's party could have made me persevere. As for old Cuttle, ever since the affair between Legrand and his daughter, he had done nothing but rave against 'the organ,' and everybody connected with it. I shouldn't have minded all this, if the circulation and advertisements had been keeping up. But they weren't. Every day they seemed to be declining, and I can tell you that commercially our prospects were about as bad as they could be.

However, I stuck to my post, and advertised again for editor and sub-editor. I got even more answers than I did on the former occasion, and—would you believe it?—nearly all the applications which I received then came back again. I had to read the same old testimonials, the same old letters, the same old specimens of literary work, by the same parsons, doctors, and barristers, the same priest, and the same refugee, as on the former occasion. Was it not sickening work?

I was in the middle of the blessed business one night, sitting at home, where I had taken the letters in order that I might read them as much at my ease as possible, when I was suddenly called by my wife who happened to be upstairs.

‘Tom,’ said she. ‘There’s a big fire in the town!’

I ran upstairs, and there I saw the reflection of a great blaze in the skies, and began to wonder whose place it was that was burning in that way—just like a heap of matchwood. At that moment the door-bell was rung violently. I ran downstairs before the servant could open it, and found a lad standing on the door-steps breathless. ‘It’s on fire, sir!’ he gasped out. ‘What is?’ ‘The office, sir.’ ‘The office?’ said I. ‘Yes, sir, the “Englishman” office, and it’s a-goin’ off like a lot of old sticks.’

It was quite true. When I got down to the place, there was nothing but the four walls standing. The type was all melted; the hoe machines were buried beneath the blazing rubbish; the editor’s room no longer existed—the whole place was a wreck! Next morning the ‘Sentinel’ had a long account of the fire, in which it spoke of the ‘Englishman’ as though it had been in the habit of referring to it every day during the last six months. The concluding words of the account were as follows: ‘Although our contemporary cannot be said to have been fortunate in the manner in which its editorial columns were conducted, we

believe that it was not unappreciated by a small and somewhat select circle of readers. We learn on good authority, that after the disaster of last night, no attempt will be made to resume its publication, and we may therefore, in the name of the inhabitants of Fogborough, bid it, and its conductors, a last farewell. *Vale ! vale !*

I don't know what the 'good authority' of the 'Sentinel' might be ; but I do know that we resolved unanimously at a meeting held almost before the ruins of the office were cold, to wind up the company, and to make no further attempt to establish 'an organ' of our own. So it came to pass that the paragraph I have quoted was the epitaph of the 'Fogborough Englishman.' And a dear bargain it was !

The above narrative is founded upon fact.

SCISSORS AND PASTE.

LET us take a peep into a daily newspaper office, and see the Sub busy at his labours. The room is dingy and small ; not overwell lit from without ; and very badly ventilated. It is night—for mid-night is the noon of the daily paper office—and half-a-dozen gas-lights flare up under green shades, heating the atmosphere so as to render it almost insupportable. In the centre of the room is a great desk or table, the principal objects distinguishable amid the litter of newspapers and MSS. that cover it, being a dirty old blotting-pad, and an inkstand the size of a tolerable punch-bowl. By the side of the sub-editor's chair is an enormous waste-paper basket, which is full to the brim, the floor all around it being covered with letters, proofs, papers, and other rubbish which have escaped from the 'Balaam-box' of the establishment. Hard by the inkstand, but hidden just now by an open copy of the 'Times,' is a paste-pot which a bill-sticker need not be ashamed of owning ;

whilst the gentleman who sits at the desk, and who is just now looking over a provincial newspaper, holds in his hands a huge *pair of scissors* !

How shall I describe the accessories of the scene ? They differ in every newspaper office in the kingdom, and yet a family-likeness may be detected in every such place. There are the smaller desks at which the sub-editor's assistants sit, and which are never more tidy than that of the ruler of this little kingdom. There is the greasy date-box, on the chimney-piece, the dingy old maps hung against the wall, the clumsy volumes of the 'file' piled in hopeless confusion in the rack, the little book-case, stuffed with works of reference—Dictionaries, Peerages, Encyclopædias—the labyrinth of speaking tubes gathered on all sides of the sub-editor's seat, and the huge heaps of old newspapers, over which the unwary visitor stumbles. This, far more than the room of the chief-leader writer or of any other member of the staff, is the real heart and centre of the great machine whose influence is felt all over England ; and the man who labours here is he who approaches most nearly to the popular ideal of a newspaper editor. It is into his hands that the epistles of 'Paterfamilias,' 'An Indignant Traveller,' 'A Volunteer,' 'A Constant Subscriber to your Valuable Journal,' and

the other variously-named writers who look to the press for the redress of their grievances, fall ; he it is who knows the night before what the paper of the next morning is going to contain ; who decides whether the 'copy' which poor Flimsy, the penny-a-liner, has dropped into the box with fear and trembling an hour before, shall be accepted and paid for, or flung carelessly into the wastebasket ; who writes the short stinging notes at the end of letters of disagreeable or wearisome correspondents, which are invariably signed 'Ed.,' as though they alone, of all the original matter in the paper, had come from the hands of the editor ; who compiles the readable summary of the day's news, whereby in five minutes you may make yourself acquainted with all the more important contents of the paper ; and under whose direction the whole of that vast array of close reading, the law reports, accounts of meetings, accidents, ceremonies, and races, letters from foreign correspondents, and miscellaneous items of information which make up the bulk of every modern newspaper, are gathered together, condensed, digested, and arranged in the convenient form in which they are subsequently presented to the public.

As he sits before us now, we may learn not a little regarding the manner in which he performs his duties by merely watching him. Here, for

instance, comes in a smartly-dressed porter, who produces, from a despatch-box the size of a small clothes-basket, a dozen newspapers and as many 'newspaper-parcels'—that is to say, letters containing copy for the paper, which have been forwarded, for greater despatch, by rail instead of by post. The newspapers the sub-editor divides between his two assistants, one of whom takes all those from abroad, whilst the other takes those from the provinces; and whilst these gentlemen are dexterously using their scissors to disembowel the unfortunate prints, their chief makes a dash at the heap of parcels—uttering something between a groan and a curse at their number as he does so. The first gives him no trouble however. It has come from abroad, and consists of a long letter, written in the most microscopic of hands upon the thinnest of paper. Space has been kept for it—for is it not the letter of their Special Commissioner to the Great Fair at Nijni-Novgorod, and will it not be the leading feature of to-morrow's 'Monitor?' So this production is at once bundled into the tin in which the 'copy ready to go out,' as it is technically termed—that is, copy ready for the hands of the compositors—is kept. But the other eleven parcels are not so easily disposed of. Two or three of them are market reports, and need but little alteration. The price of corn at Norwich, of iron at Wolver-

hampton, of cotton at Manchester, are all given in these brief despatches ; and however uninteresting they may be to the general public, there would be no small outcry amongst certain classes of the community if they failed to appear to-morrow morning.

But these disposed of, the sub-editor's difficulties begin. He opens one envelope, and takes out of it an enormous batch of thin tissue-paper—familiarily known as flimsy—all of which is devoted to the history of a horrible murder which has been committed that very day at Nottingham. He opens the next envelope, and here is another account of the same tragedy, furnished by a rival 'liner.' Our sub is a bold man, but he shrinks from the task of putting either of these voluminous narratives into a concise and readable shape. Both his assistants are fully occupied, however, and he has no alternative but to attempt the task. So he selects one of the reports, and by the aid of his scissors and a red pencil, he reduces it to about one-tenth of its original length—a work which occupies him nearly a quarter of an hour—and having done this, he adds the sub-edited report to the heap of copy ready for the printer.

It would no doubt amuse my readers if I were to publish the narrative as forwarded by the penny-a-liner with the narrative as it appeared in the

next morning's 'Monitor'; but as it is just possible that the editor of this journal might object to such a proceeding, as an encroachment on his valuable space, I shall content myself with giving merely the title and the first two sentences of the original and revised narratives. The original report, then, runs as follows: 'Horrible Murder of a Grandmother by her Grandchildren at Nottingham, yesterday.—Rarely has it been our unspeakably melancholy duty to have to attempt to chronicle the awful details of a crime so shocking and so unnatural in all its peculiar circumstances, as that which yesterday aroused a feeling of the most uncontrollable horror and indignation in the breasts of the whole of the peaceable and well-disposed inhabitants of Nottingham, and for a few hours, at any rate, completely put a stop to the staple industries of the place. The shocking crime was nothing less than the brutal and cold-blooded assassination of one whose age and infirmities, whose gray hairs and palsied limbs—to say nothing of her relation to the perpetrators, who were the children of her own daughter—should have saved her from any indignity or violence, and above all, from such a tragical and melancholy termination to her earthly career as has now befallen her.' And this is what the sub has made of the above:

‘Murder at Nottingham.—A shocking crime was committed at Nottingham yesterday, an old woman having been murdered by her two grandsons.’

This work safely completed, he has the same duty to perform in the case of half-a-dozen other paragraphs of news, all of which need to be condensed and revised, and some altogether re-written, before they are fit for publication ; and whilst he is engaged in this task he has to keep a sharp look-out in every instance to see that nothing which the elastic law of libel can construe into a slander passes through his hands. One of the surest marks of a thoroughly good sub-editor is the success with which he keeps his paper out of actions for libel. A single sentence slipped into the middle of a long report may, if it is published, entail the loss of hundreds or even thousands of pounds upon a newspaper proprietor, and it is therefore absolutely necessary that the utmost care should be taken in revising everything that is inserted in the paper.

And now a fresh batch of copy awaits our Sub's good offices. This time the copy has been brought from the Telegraph Office. Mr. Bright or Mr. Disraeli has been speaking at Birmingham, or Manchester, or Leeds, and this is the report of the oration. You who will enjoy the smooth flowing sentences, and the eloquent peroration of the speech

to-morrow, have little idea of the labour that has been undergone in order to provide you with the complete report. Down at Birmingham or Manchester, several shorthand writers, specially employed by the Press Association for the London papers, have been toiling—first of all in a heated public hall, and afterwards in the close room of the Telegraph Office—in reporting Mr. Bright's speech, and transcribing their notes into long-hand. As they have completed each slip of their transcript, it has forthwith been handed to one of the clerks at the instrument, and the words immediately sent along the wires to London, and possibly to Edinburgh and Glasgow also. In London, a fresh copy is written, as the message arrives, by the clerks; and it is this copy that is now lying before our sub-editor. The clerks of the Telegraph Office possess the knack of writing in the most illegible of hands, and with the faintest of pencils, on the greasiest of paper.

To read a single sentence so written would be a labour to most people; but when, instead of a single sentence, three or four columns of matter have to be deciphered and revised, the task becomes one of the most wearisome and painful description. Moreover, though a speech by Mr. Bright does not require condensation, like the report of a penny-a-liner, the blunders that creep

into it during its transmission by telegraph are so numerous and so gross, that if it is not carefully revised and corrected, the reader in the morning will think that Mr. Bright has been indulging too freely in the port wine which he generally drinks while making a long speech in the provinces. In 1866, for instance, when, at the close of his magnificent oration at Glasgow, he said : ' Let us try the people. This is our faith ; this is our purpose ; this is our cry ! ' the telegraph clerks made the last word into ' country,' thus making nonsense of that clause. In a speech at Manchester, again, he spoke of the alarm which the London Reform Demonstration was exciting in the breasts of certain persons at the West End, ' attenders of clubs,' and so on. In several papers, the next morning instead of the words I have quoted, appeared the words ' vendors of gloves,' as though the hosiers and glove-dealers of the West End were a peculiarly Conservative set of tradesmen. These are only specimens of the blunders which the sub-editor has to detect and remove ; and when we consider that he hasn't heard the speech himself, and that in revising it he has to do so slip by slip at a time as it arrives from the Telegraph Office, we must acknowledge that his task is one of no small difficulty.

But if he is occupied with Mr. Bright, his col-

leagues are every bit as busily engaged. The gentleman who attends to the Foreign department is trying to make sense of Mr. Reuter's despatches. Possibly, he may be consulting maps and gazetteers for the names which they contain; and then, in a clear and neatly-written summary, he explains the horribly-confused telegram, and makes its meaning plain to the humblest of his readers. As to the other sub-editor—who may be said to make himself generally useful—his labours at this moment are so varied and multifarious, that I despair of conveying any idea of them by verbal description. He has a long sporting letter from the 'prophet' of the paper to scan through—with a keen nose for libel, which abounds in such productions—he has a tiresome complaint from somebody who has a grievance against a railway company to revise; two or three paragraphs to cut down; a report from a country newspaper to rewrite, and bring into the space of a few lines and the bill of the contents of the paper to prepare.

Nor is the principal sub-editor allowed to continue his task without interruption. The overseer of the printing-office has just come down to remonstrate with him on the quantity of copy he has sent up, and to allege the utter impossibility of getting even half of it into the next morning's

paper. 'I can't do it, Mr. Pastepot. If the "forms" were made of india-rubber, I might try; but as they aren't, it's no use.' To which the sub-editor, with a savage growl—sub-editors always are savage after midnight, so never ask a favour of them at that time—responds: 'Confound you, Stick! What's the good of coming and telling me that? *I* don't make the copy. You haven't got a line that can be left out; and it *must* be got in, so the sooner you get to work the better.' You, good people, who, when there is a sensational murder or accident, say: 'Ah, these newspaper fellows will have something to fill up with now,' don't know how ridiculously wide of the mark you are in making such an observation. For every time that the sub-editor finds it difficult to fill the yawning columns of his broadsheet, there are a score of times when he has more copy than he can make room for.

About an hour after the conversation recorded above, when the last of Bright's speech has been received, and the last train from the country come in, Mr. Pastepot will go up-stairs to the 'composing-room'—where types, not poems or leaders, are composed—and hold an affectionate but mournful consultation with the faithful Stick, the result of which will be the setting aside of a considerable quantity

of matter that ought to have gone into the newspaper, but for which it has been impossible to find room. Then, when the small hours are beginning to grow bigger, and the sun—if it is summer weather—to fill the streets with the cool, gray light of morning, weary Mr. Pastepot and his colleagues will hurry away to their homes, to enjoy the repose which they have earned so well.

I have only included a portion, and a very small portion of the sub-editor's daily work in this sketch. It is only by years of painful toil that a man masters all the duties of such a post, and it cannot therefore be expected that I should compress a description of those duties into two or three pages of this volume. Let me say, however, that there are sub-editors, and sub-editors. Some are merely the tools in the hand of the managing editor, and of little more account than the scissors which they use; others, on the other hand, have more to do with the success of the papers they are connected with than the most brilliant of leader-writers. Indeed, when we remember that the sub-editor, as a rule, has entire control over all that portion of the paper which is not occupied by the contributions of the leader-writers, we must acknowledge the importance of his duties, and of the position which he holds. Nor must we forget its responsibilities

and temptations. An unprincipled sub-editor can at almost any time gratify a private grudge by means of his influence in connection with his office ; or he can sacrifice honesty to favouritism, and fill his pockets, or gratify a friend, by using the columns over which he has control for that purpose. Happily, it is seldom indeed that such things occur. That they take place sometimes, must be confessed with regret ; but they are so rare, that they cast no reflection upon the credit which the newspaper press, as a whole, enjoys. And on the other hand, many newspapers have been served by their sub-editors with a fidelity bordering on the romantic.

Without revealing any prison-house secrets, I may mention that I know at least one newspaper now producing an enormous revenue to its proprietors, which but a few years back was only saved from absolute extinction by the efforts of its sub-editor. Had he not begged and borrowed money enough to pay for its machining for a week, it would have died without a struggle ; and instead of being the great power in journalism which it now is, would have been long since forgotten. Indeed, a paper can hardly hope to achieve any great success which is badly sub-edited ; and that there is such a thing as bad sub-editing, every newspaper reader must acknowledge. How is it that some journals are

always dull, always uninteresting? How is it that others are continually finding their way into the law courts as defendants in actions for libel? No years of training will make a good sub-editor of a man who has not the peculiar journalistic instinct—the faculty which enables him to see at once what is important and what is unimportant—what is likely to interest, not a class merely, but the public at large, and what will only weary and disgust them. And so rare is this faculty, that when a really good sub-editor is discovered, and obtains a place on a first-class newspaper, he has no chance of rising from that position. Leader-writers can be had in abundance, but sub-editors are born, not made; and a man who has once become a sub, and shown that he is a good one, finds a great gulf opened between himself and the superior rank of journalists. He is too valuable to be allowed to escape from his position, and I have even known in such a case the leaders of a sub-editor refused insertion, simply because the proprietors were determined to give him no encouragement in his efforts to rise to the higher dignity.

Of the comic side of a sub-editor's work, I might no doubt say a great deal; but abler pens than mine have touched upon it. There is a never-failing source of amusement to the outsider—and

annoyance to the sub-editor himself—to be found in the letters with which he is daily pelted. The contents of his waste-paper basket are often infinitely more comic than a number of ‘Punch.’ Now he is addressed by some amateur, who, having a little leisure on his hands says he is ‘disposed to write a few articles for a newspaper, and will be glad to know the terms at which the editor remunerates a man of talent’—a gratuitous piece of impertinence that is attempted in no other profession; and now he receives a contribution, the orthography of which surpasses even Thackeray’s choicest master-pieces, but which, when he has deciphered it, turns out to be the opening of an epic poem ‘rispectfly submitted for the edditors considrashon.’ And then the questions that he is asked—but that theme is boundless. He is asked, literally, about everything, in the world, under the world, and above the world; and just to give one single specimen of the character of the queries submitted to him, I may state that I have now before me a letter received, within twelve hours of the present writing, by the sub-editor of a daily paper, asking if Oliver Cromwell founded the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts!

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